

# REDEMPTION REDEEMED:

*A Puritan Defense of Unlimited Atonement*



**JOHN GOODWIN**

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[The following is the entire title of this truly great and learned work. In the original edition it occupies nearly the whole of a folio page. It was too long to be prefixed to the present octavo edition; and is inserted here, that the reader may have, without mutilation, one of the most original and argumentative treatises in the English language.]

## **REDEMPTION REDEEMED.**

Wherein the Most Glorious Work of the  
**REDEMPTION**

Of the World by *Jesus Christ*, is by Expressness of Scripture, clearness of Argument, countenance of the best Authority, as well Ancient as Modern, Vindicated and Asserted in the Just Latitude and Extent of it, according to the Counsel and most Gracious Intentions of God, against the incroachments of later times made upon it, whereby the unsearchable Riches and Glory of the Grace of GOD therein, have been, and yet are, much obscured, and hid from the eyes of many.

Together with a sober, plain, and through Discussion of the great Questions relating hereunto, as viz. concerning

## **ELECTION AND REPROBATION,**

The Sufficiency, and Efficacy of the Means vouchsafed unto Men by GOD, to Repent and Believe; concerning the Perseverance of the Saints, and those who do Believe; concerning the Nature of GOD, his manner of Acting, his Intentions, Purposes, Decrees, &c. the Dependency of all Creatures or second Causes upon Him, as well in their Operations, as simple Existencies, or Beings, &c.

The Decision of all these Questions founded upon the good Word of GOD, interpreted according to the generally received Doctrine, concerning the Nature and Attributes of GOD, the manifest Exigency of the Words, Phrases, coherencies, in the respective passages hereof relating to the said Questions, as also (for the most part) according to the Judgment and Sense of the best Expositors, as well Modern, as Ancient.

*With three Tables annexed for the Readers accommodation.*

By JOHN GOODWIN, A servant of God in the Gospel of his dear Son.

**The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two Friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Job 42:7.**

LONDON,  
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to be sold at their shop in *Popes bead Alley*, near *Lumbard* street  
M.DC.LI,

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TO THE  
**REV. DR. BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE,**  
PROVOST OF KING'S COLLEGE, AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE;

TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF THE  
HEADS OF COLLEGES AND STUDENTS IN DIVINITY  
IN THAT FAMOUS UNIVERSITY.

REVEREND and right worthy Gentlemen, Friends, and Brethren in Christ, how either yourselves or others will interpret this Dedication, I am, I confess, no such seer as to be able to foresee; and were the foresight hereof to be bought, I should strain myself very little to make the purchase. I have the witness within me, whose prerogative it is to laugh all jealousies and suggestions of men to scorn, which rise up in opposition to his testimony, clearly assuring me that the oracles consulted by me about this Dedication were neither any undervaluing of you, nor overvaluing of myself, or of the piece here presented unto you, nor any desire of drawing respects from you, either to my person or anything that is mine; much less any malignity of desire to cause you to drink of my cup, or to bring you under the same cloud of disparagement with me, which the world hath spread round about me. Praise unto his grace, who hath taught me some weak rudiments of his heavenly art of drawing light out of darkness, for mine own use, I have not been for so many years together trampled upon to so little purpose, as to remain yet either ignorant or insensible of mine own vileness, and what element I am nearest allied unto; or so tender and querulous as either to complain of the weight of those who still “go over me as the stones in the street,” or to project the sufferings of others in order to my own solace and relief. My long deprivation and want of respects from men is now turned to an athletic habit, somewhat after the manner of those who by long fasting lose their appetites, and withal, either contract or find an ability or contentedness of nature to live with little or no meat afterwards. I can, (Philip. 4:13,) from the dunghill whereon I sit, with much contentment and sufficient enjoyment of myself, behold my brethren on thrones round about me.

The prize, then, that I run for in my dedicatory applications unto you is, by the opportunity and advantage hereof, to excite, provoke, and engage, and this, if it may be, beyond and above all reasonableness of pretence to decline the service, those whom I judged the most able, and not the least willing among their brethren, to bless the world, labouring and turmoiling itself under its own vanity and folly, by bringing forth the

glorious Creator and ever-blessed Redeemer of it out of their pavilions of darkness into a clear and perfect light, to be beheld, revered, and adored in all their glory; to be possessed, enjoyed, delighted in, in all their beauty, sweetness, and desirableness, by the inhabitants of the earth. I know you have no need to be taught; but possibly you may have some need to consider that your gifts, parts, learning, knowledge, wisdom, books, studies, opportunities, pleasant mansions, will all suddenly make company for that which is not, and never turn to any account of true greatness unto you, nor of any interest worthy the lightest thoughts of truly prudent and considering men, unless they shall, by a serious and solemn act of consecration, be consigned over unto, and interested in, that great service of God and men whereby that blessed union between them shall be promoted and advanced, the foundations whereof have been by so high an hand of grace laid in the blood of Jesus Christ. You know the saying of the great Prophet of the world,—“He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad,” Matt. 12:30. Whatsoever shall not suffer, yea, and offer itself to be taken and carried along by and with Jesus Christ, in that grand and sublime motion wherein he moveth daily, according to the counsel of his Father, in a straight course for the saving of the world, will most certainly be dissipated and shattered all to nothing, by the irresistible dint and force thereof; how much more that which shall stand in his way, obstruct, and oppose him in this his motion! Especially gifts, parts, reason, understanding in men, improved and raised, or under means and opportunities of being improved and raised by study, learning, knowledge, if these do not make one shoulder with Jesus Christ in lifting up the world from the gates of death ; much more in case they shall disadvantage and indispose the world to a receiving of those impressions from Christ by which it should or might otherwise be thus lifted up by him, will undoubtedly, above the rate of all other things, abound to the shame, judgment, confusion, and condemnation of men. When men of rich endowments, and worthy abilities of learning and knowledge, shall give their strength in this kind to other studies, contemplations, and inquiries, suffering, in the mean time, the minds and consciences of men to corrupt, putrify, and perish in their sad pollutions through that ignorance, or, which is worse, those disloyal and profane notions and conceptions of God and of Christ which reign, or rather indeed rage, in the midst of them, without taking any compassion on

them, by searching out and discovering unto them those most excellent and worthy things of God and Christ, the knowledge whereof would be unto them as a resurrection from death unto life; they do but write their names in the dust, and buy vanity with that worthy price which was put into their hand for a far more honourable purchase. And yet, of the two, they are sons of the greater folly, and prevaricate far more sadly with the dearest and deepest interest, both of themselves and other men, who, by suffering their reasons and judgments to be abused either by sloth and supine oscitancy, or else by sinister and carnal respects otherwise (for there is a far different consideration of those who miscarry at this point, through a mere nescience or human infirmity) bring forth a strange God and a strange Christ unto the world, such as neither the Scriptures, nor reason unbewitched, know or own, and this under the name of the true God indeed, and of the true Christ; yea, and most importunately and imperiously burden and charge the consciences of men with the dread of Divine displeasure and the vengeance of hell-fire, if they refuse to fall down, and bow the knee of their judgments before those images and representations which they set up, as if in all their lineaments and parts they exhibited the true God and the true Christ, according to the truth.

The apostle Paul relates a sad story of a great fire of indignation kindled in the breast of God, and breaking out, in a very formidable manner, upon the heathen, who, as he saith, “knew God,” Rom. 1:21, (*i. e.* had means sufficient to bring them to the knowledge of God,) and withal “professed themselves wise men,” Rom. 1:22. Whether by such men he means the philosophers in particular, and learned men amongst them, (which is the more probable, and the more received sense of interpreters,) or whether the generality of them, (as Calvin rather supposeth,) varieth not the story in any point of difference much material to my purpose. The misery which these men brought upon themselves through the just displeasure of God, is first, in general, drawn up by the apostle in these words, that “professing themselves wise, they became fools,” (or rather were infatuated, or made fools, as Calvin well expoundeth,) *i. e.* whilst they assumed unto themselves the honour and repute of much wisdom and understanding, God, as it were, insensibly, and by degrees, withdrew that lively presence of his Spirit from them, by which they had been formerly raised and enlarged, as well to conceive and apprehend, as to act and do, like wise and prudent men: but now the

wonted presence of this Spirit of God failing them, the savour and vigour of their wisdom and understandings proportionably abated and declined, as Samson's strength upon the cutting of his hair, sank and fell to the line of the weakness of other men. Secondly, The misery which these men drew upon their own head, by breaking, as they did, with God, is termed by the apostle "a delivering up" or giving over "to a reprobate mind," Rom. 1:28; which seems to import somewhat more sad and deeply penal than a simple infatuation, or at least the height and consummation hereof. "A reprobate" or injudicious "mind," implies such a constitution or condition of that sovereign and supreme faculty in man, his understanding, whose proper office and work it is to order, umpire, and command in chief all his motions, and actions, as well internal as outward, that light and darkness, things comely and things uncomely, actions and ways pregnantly comporting with, and actions and ways palpably destructive unto, the dear interest of his eternal peace, shall, especially upon a practical account, be of one and the same consideration to him; neither shall he be capable of any difference of impression from things that differ in the highest. The "delivering up" of a man by God to such "a reprobate mind" as this, clearly supposeth the frame and constitution of the mind and understanding of man to be naturally reprobate ; I mean, considered as the sin of Adam hath defaced and distempered it, and as it would have been in all men in case the great Advocate and Mediator of mankind had not interposed to procure the gracious conjunction of the illuminating Spirit of God with it; yea, and as it will be, whensoever this Spirit of God shall be so far offended and provoked by a man as wholly to depart and desert it. So that this judiciary act of God, in "giving" men "over to a reprobate mind," imports nothing but the total withdrawing of all communion and converse by his Spirit with them, hereby leaving them in the hand, and under the inspection, of such a mind or understanding which is naturally, properly, and entirely their own. In which case the mind and understanding of a man suffers after some such manner as a quantity of good, wholesome, and spiritfuf wine would do, in case it should be bereft of all the subtile and spirituous parts of it by a chemical extraction made by fire; that which should remain after such a separation, would be but as water, without strength or taste.

Now the cause of this fire of displeasure kindled in the breast of God

against the persons mentioned, burning so near to the bottom of hell, as we heard, our apostle recordeth, first in these words, "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," Rom. 1:21 ; afterwards in these, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," &c., ver. 28, or, (as the original, I humbly conceive, would rather bear,) "as they did not make trial," *i. e.* put themselves to it, engage their abilities, "to have God in acknowledgment," *i. e.* so to discover him to the world, that he might be acknowledged in his sovereign greatness and transcendent excellences by men. From which passages laid together, it clearly appears, 1. That for men that "know God," or have means and opportunities of knowing him, not to "glorify him" like himself, and "as God," is a sin of a very high provocation, and which directly, and with a swift course, tends to an utter dissolution of all communion and friendly converse between God and men. 2. That for men of knowledge, parts, and abilities, to neglect the manifestation and making known of God, in and to the world, to the intent that he may be "acknowledged," revered, loved, delighted in by his creature, is a strain of the worst resentment with God of that unthankfulness, which he interprets a "non-glorifying him as God," or like himself.

Knowing the terror of the Lord in the way of the premises, brethren honoured and beloved in the Lord, according to the measure of the light of the knowledge of himself which he hath been graciously pleased to shine in my heart, I have in the ensuing discourse lifted up my heart and soul, and all that is within me, to the discovery and manifestation of him in the world, in the truth of his nature, attributes, counsels, decrees, ways, and dispensations; and that with a single eye, with clearness and simplicity of intention, to disencumber the minds, judgments, and consciences of men of such thoughts and apprehensions concerning him which are evil mediators between him and his creature, feeding and fomenting that distance and enmity between them, which have been occasioned by sinful and unworthy deportment on the creature's side. I confess that in some particulars managed and asserted in the discourse, I have been led (I trust by the Spirit of truth and of God) out of the way more generally occupied by those who of later times have travelled the same regions of inquiry with me. But deeply pondering what Augustin somewhere saith, that "as nothing can be found out more beneficial unto the world than somewhat further of God than is at present known, so

nothing is attempted or sought after with more danger,” I have steered my course in the subsequent debates with all tenderness and circumspection, arguing nothing, concluding nothing but either from the grammatical sense or best known signification of words and phrases in the Scripture, and this, for the most part, if not constantly, in conjunction both with the scope of places, the express consent and agreement of contexts, together with the analogy of the Scriptures themselves in other places, or else from the most unquestionable and universally received principles and maxims either in religion or sound reason, and more particularly from such notions concerning the nature of God, and his attributes and perfections, which I find generally subscribed with the names and pens of all that are called orthodox amongst us, and have written of such things. Nor have I anywhere receded from the more general sense of interpreters in the explication of any text or passage of Scripture, but only where either the express signification of words, or the vergency (or rather, indeed, urgency) of the context, or some repugnancy to the expressness of Scripture elsewhere, or else some pregnant inconsistency with some clear principle either of religion, or sound reason, necessitated me unto it. Yea, I seldom upon any of these accounts leave the common road of interpreters, but I find that some or other, one or more, of the most intelligent of them have trodden the same path before me. And for the most part Chrysostom, among the ancient expositors, and Calvin himself among the modern, are my companions in the paths of my greatest solitariness. Concerning the main doctrine avouched in the discourse, wherein the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, no particular person or member hereof excepted, is held forth and asserted, I demonstrate by many testimonies from the best records of antiquity that this was the oecumenical sense of the Christian world in her primitive and purest times. Nor am I conscious to myself (I speak as in the presence of God) of any the least mistake, either in word or meaning, of any author or testimony cited by me throughout the whole discourse, nor yet of any omission in point of diligence or care for the prevention of all mistakes in either kind.

The discourse, such as it is, with all respects of honour and love, I present unto you; not requiring anything from you by way of countenance or approbation, otherwise than upon those equitable terms on which Augustus recommended his children unto the care and favour of the

Senate, “Si meruerit.” Only as a friend and lover of the truth, name, and glory of God and Jesus Christ, and of the peace, joy, and salvation of the world, with you, I shall take leave to pour out my heart and soul in this request unto you, that either you will confirm, by setting to the royal signet of your approbation and authority, the great doctrine here maintained, if you judge it to be a truth; or else vouchsafe to deliver me, and many others, from the snare thereof, by taking away, with a hand of light and potency of demonstration, those weapons, whether texts of Scripture or grounds in reason, wherein you will find by the discourse itself that we put our trust. Your contestation upon these terms will be of a resentment with me more precious and accepted than your attestation, in case of your comport in judgment with me, though I shall ingenuously confess and profess that, for the truth’s sake, even in this also I shall greatly rejoice. Notwithstanding, I judge it much more, of the two, richly conducing to the dear interest of my peace and safety, to be delivered from my errors, than to receive countenance and approbation from men in what I hold or teach according to the truth.

If nothing which is here pleaded, whether from the Scriptures or otherwise, shall be able to overrule your judgments into an acknowledgment of truth in the main doctrine contended for, in which case you will, I trust, though not with respect to my request in that behalf, yet for the truth’s sake, and for your own interest’s sake, as well in the things of this world as of that which is to come, declare yourselves in some worthy and satisfactory answer to the particulars here propounded; I shall not need, I presume, to desire you, that in your answer you will not rise up in your might against the weaker, looser, or less considered passages or expressions, (of which kind you may very possibly meet with many more than enough,) but that you will rather bend the strength of your reply against the strength of what you shall oppose, at least if there be any thing herein worthy such a title. You well know that a field may be won, though many soldiers of the conquering side should fall or be wounded in the battle; and that a tree may flourish, and retain both its beauty and firmness of standing in the earth, though many of the smaller twigs or lesser branches should prove dry and sere, and so be easily broken off. So may a mountain remain unmoved, yea, and unmoveable, though many handfuls of the lighter and looser earth about the sides of it, should be taken up and scattered into the air like dust. In like manner,



the main body of a discourse may stand entire in its solidity, weight, and strength, though many particular expressions, sayings, and reasonings therein, that are more circumferential, and remote from the centre, should be detected either of inconsiderateness, weakness, or un-truth. Yea, in some cases, one argument or plea may be so triumphantly pregnant and commanding that, though many others of the same engagement should be defeated, yet the cause protected by it may, upon a very sober and justifiable account, laugh all opposition of contrary arguings to scorn. I acknowledge there are some expressions and passages in the ensuing discourse, as in Chap. 1. p. 48, and elsewhere, which, upon the review, I myself apprehend obnoxious enough to exception, yea, and which, had my second thoughts been bom in due time, should have been somewhat better secured. But I trust that ancient law of indulgence in such cases as mine (which very probably may be some of your own also) is of authority sufficient in your commonwealth to relieve me:

**On him that sits long at work, sleep, without disparagement may creep.**

Neither need I suspect or fear any of that unmanlike learning amongst you, which teacheth men to confute opinions by vulgar votes and exclamations. “We know that this sect” or heresy “is everywhere spoken against,” Acts 28:22, had no influence upon Paul to turn him out of the way of his “heresy.” And for those mormolukes or vizors of Arminianism, Socinianism, Popery, Pelagianism, with the like, which serve to affright children in understanding out of the love and liking of many most worthy and important truths, I am not under any jealousy concerning you, that you should suffer any such impressions from them. You know that that great enemy of the peace and salvation of men, who of old taught the enemies of God to put his saints into bears’ skins and wolves’ skins, so preparing them to be tom in pieces and devoured by dogs, hath in these latter times secretly insinuated and prevailed with many of the children of God themselves to put many of his truths, such as they like not or comprehend not, into names of ignominy and reproach, to draw others into the same hatred and defamation of them with themselves. I have somewhere observed, that this method of confuting and suppressing opinions, against which men have had no competent grounds of eviction

otherwise, was at first invented by the subtle sons of the synagogue of Rome; and elsewhere shown, by several instances, that it is familiarly practised by them.

The truth is, that you have no such temptation upon you, as particular and private men have, to flee to any such polluted sanctuary as that mentioned, to save your names and reputations from the hand of any opinion or doctrine whatsoever. For you so far, I presume, understand your interest and prerogative, that for matters of opinion and doctrine, you are invested with an autocratorical majesty, like that which was sometimes given unto Nebuchadnezzar over men: "whom he would, he slew; and whom he would, he kept alive: whom he would, he set up; and whom he would, he put down," Dan. 5:19. By the joint suffrage of your authority, your interest of esteem amongst men being so predominant, you may slay what doctrines, what opinions you please; and what you please you may keep alive; of what tenets you please, you may make the faces to shine; and of what you please, you may lay the honour in the dust. If you will justify, who are they that will not be afraid to condemn? if you condemn, who will justify? Only God's eldest daughter, Truth, hath one mightier than you on her side, who will justify her in due time, though you should condemn her; and will raise her up from the dead the third day, in case you shall slay her. However, if the doctrine commended in the discourse now presented unto you, shall commend itself in your eyes also for a truth, far be it from you to hide your faces from it, because at present it labours and suffers reproach in the world, considering that you may very suddenly take away the reproach, and partake yourselves of that honour which you shall cast upon it. Should such an university as you fear the reproach of standing by a truth? Jesus Christ is not ashamed of the bodies of his saints, living or dead, though in both conditions vile and contemptible in the eyes of men, knowing that he hath power in his hand to clothe them with glory and immortality when he pleaseth, and that this glory, when vested in them, will be a high augmentation of his own.

Brethren, unto you I may truly say, with Paul to his Philippians, that "I have you in my heart," Philip, 1:7. I can look upon you with an eye of good hope, as a generation of men anointed by God with a spirit of wisdom, knowledge, zeal, and faithfulness, to bring on the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell; and this by repairing the

breaches and decayed places in the body of the doctrine of Christian religion, which, since the first raising and completing of it by Christ and his apostles, partly through the ignorance and insufficiency, partly through the oscitancy and remissness of those to whom the guardianship and custody thereof have been committed by God, in their successive generations, hath been lamentably dismantled, misfigured, and defaced, and this well nigh in all the integral and principal parts of it, more or less; insomuch that a man who truly and clearly apprehends what this doctrine was, and yet is, in her purity and native frame, and shall compare it with the system or body of divinity which, under this notion, is commonly taught and held forth amongst us, will hardly be able to say, This is the doctrine of Christ. For whosoever shall engage himself with that diligence, thoroughness, and impartialness of inquiry which become those who run for so high a prize as an incorruptible crown of glory, to consider what is ordinarily delivered and more generally received amongst us, not only in and about those great points of election, reprobation, redemption, the efficacy and extent of the grace of God, and perseverance of the saints; but also about many other heads of Christian doctrine, as about faith, justification, the sufferings of Christ, the intercession of Christ, repentance, good works, baptism, the state and condition of the dead until the resurrection, with sundry more, and shall, with like diligence, consider what the Scriptures teach concerning these particulars respectively, will clearly and distinctly see, that though Christ be not so ill formed amongst us in some of these doctrines as he is in others, yet he is represented very unlike, and much beneath himself, in them all. So that as Joshua, though he performed the part of a valiant captain, and made a worthy progress in the conquest of the land of Canaan before his death, yet left a very considerable portion of the work to be achieved by others after him, Judges 1:1—9, &c.; in like manner Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, with others, who laboured with much honour and success in the work of reformation, and reduced the body of Christian religion to a far better complexion and constitution than that wherein they found it, yet left it under so much craziness and unsoundness that other physicians also, and those of best value, have large opportunities before them for enriching the world, and themselves also, by perfecting the cure. I look upon you as men the likeliest I know to wear this crown. As for those who of late attempted the building of a

fence-wall of discipline, under the name of a Reformation, about that vineyard of Christ amongst us of which I now speak, and to this day seem to lie under much regret of spirit, both against God and men, for hindering them in their building, the truth is, in such an attempt, the unreformedness and unsoundness of the doctrine commonly received amongst us and taught by themselves considered, they ran a like course of inconsiderateness which a husbandman would do, that should go about to make a strong and tight hedge about his field, whilst his neighbour's cattle are feeding and spoiling the corn in the midst of it.

Brethren, my pen hath transgressed the line and law of my intentions. These confined me to a much narrower compass in my epistle, and prohibited me the troubling of you to any such degree as now I have done. The truth is, my affections to you interposed, and occasioned the transgression. Love is bountiful; and, I trust, will as naturally produce pardon on your side as it hath brought forth such a transgression on mine. In all this address I have desired nothing of you, little or much, upon mine own account, save only so far as your ingenuous and worthy deportment in the particulars offered, together with the unspeakable benefit and blessing which you shall bring upon the world thereby, will be matter of joy and high contentment unto me. Envy me not my "rejoicing with the truth," though herein I should be found equal to the greatest of you,—it is the best of my portion in the world. I shall discharge you from any further sufferings from my pen at present, only with my soul poured out before the great God and Father of lights, in prayer for you, that he will make his face to shine upon you, in quickening your apprehensions, enlarging your understandings, balancing your judgments, strengthening your memories, in giving you ableness of body, willingness of mind, to labour in those rich mines of truth, the Scriptures, in breaking up before you the fountains of those great depths of spiritual light and heavenly understanding, in assisting you mightily by his Spirit in the course of your studies, in lifting you up in the spirit of your minds above the faces, fears, respects of men, in drawing out your hearts and souls to relieve the spiritual necessities and extremities of the world round about you, in making you so many burning and shining lights in his house and temple, the joy, glory, and delight of your nation, in vouchsafing unto you as much of all that is desirable in the things of this world as your spiritual interest will bear, and the reward of prophets respectively in the glory

and great things of the world to come.  
Your poor brother in Christ,  
Always ready in love to serve the meanest of you;

JOHN GOODWIN.

FROM MY STUDY IN COLEMAN-STREET,  
LONDON, FEB. 22, 1659.

## PREFACE.

### GOOD READER,

THE account of my application unto thee in this epistle, is this. Not loving, with Job, to eat my morsels alone, I desire thy company at my table, in the ensuing discourse. If thy intellectual taste be the same with mine, (which I question not, if thou hast not eaten somewhat already, which disordereth and corrupteth it,) and thy spiritual constitution the same also, (from which, if thou beest healthful and sound, it cannot much differ,) I doubt not, but in case thou pleasest to accept of the invitation, and eat of the bread here set before thee, thou wilt find it both pleasant in thy mouth, and strengthening to thy soul. I confess that till some few years last past, I was myself accustomed to another diet, and fed upon that bread which was commonly prepared by my brethren in the ministry for the people of the land, and children of God amongst them. But the truth is, I found it ever and anon gravelish in my mouth, and corroding and fretting in my bowels. Notwithstanding, the reverend and high esteem I had of many of those who prepared it, and fed upon it themselves, in conjunction with those harder thoughts which I was occasioned by some undue carriages in many of those who lived upon bread of another moulding, to take up against them, together with a raw and ill-digested conceit I had, that there was no better or less-offensive bread to be had from any hand whatsoever, prevailed upon me to content myself therewith for a long time, though not without some regret of discontentment also with it.

But to leave my parable; that which first turned to a sharp engagement upon me, to search more narrowly and thoroughly than formerly I had done, into the controversies agitated in the subsequent discourse, was a pamphlet published by a young man about five or six years since, under the title of “A Vindication of Free Grace,” &c., which, though libellous enough, and full of broad untruths, yet the face of it being fiercely set against me and my doctrine, it was lifted up well nigh as near unto the heavens as Herod’s oration, Acts 12:22, by the applause of such persons in and about the city, whose ways in matter of discipline and thoughts in other more weighty points of Christian religion, my understanding would never serve me to make mine. Being for a time under a conscientious

resentment of a necessity lying upon me to publish some answer to the said pamphlet, as well the person as the doctrine therein stigmatized being innocent of all crimes there charged on them, I fell to work accordingly, and drew up a competent answer, as I supposed, thereunto, with the perusal whereof I was willing, upon request, to gratify some private friends, amongst whom it lay dormant for some time. In the interim, perceiving that the noise which the said pamphlet had made was but like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and that the heat of the tumultuary rejoicing occasioned by it had exhaled and spent itself, I began to consider that the answer which I had prepared, a good part of it being taken up in proving the pamphleteer tardy in several reports made by him of matters of fact, the knowledge whereof would be, I conceived, of slender edification, and of no great acceptation unto readers, and the detection of him in such unworthy practices might be offensive to some of his friends whom I well respected, might in these respects rather cumber than benefit the world, in case it were published. And considering further, that the matters of real weight and consequence insisted upon in the answer, being here handled only according to the exigency of the particulars of my charge, respectively, might more satisfactorily, and with more advantage to the peace and comfort of men, be discoursed in a just and entire treatise, I accordingly changed my intentions of publishing the said answer into a resolution of declaring and asserting my judgment about the doctrinal imputations specified and managed therein against me more at large. This resolution continuing with me, seconded and strengthened with further light shining into my heart daily from the Father of lights, about those important affairs which lay upon mine hand to manage, not only in order to my own vindication in such passages of doctrine wherein I was publicly traduced by the pamphleteer as a teacher of errors, but to the Christian information and consolation of others also, hath at last given the light of life to the ensuing treatise, the perusal whereof I desire to recommend upon such terms unto thee, that thou mayest resent it as worthy thy labour, and the best exercise and engagement of thy mind and thoughts.

This, I presume, I should do effectually, if I were able, in the first place, to possess thee thoroughly with a true notion of the danger of error and misapprehension in the things of God; secondly, with the deep and solemn necessity which lieth upon all persons of mankind without

exception, who are endued with reason and understanding, to engage these worthy and noble faculties to their uttermost, about the things of God and matters of salvation; and lastly, with the innocency and inoffensiveness of the doctrines maintained in the present discourse, in respect of those vulgar imputations which, by way of prejudice, are laid to their charge. And these things I shall endeavour, within the narrowest compass of words, wherein it is lightly possible for matters of so great consequence to be transacted to any purpose, in the remainder of this epistle.

For the first: truth, especially in things of a supernatural concernment, the knowledge whereof faceth eternity, and without which, in some competent degree, no person capable of it can, or will be judged by God, “meet to partake with the saints in the inheritance of light,” being nothing else, interpretatively, but God himself, prepared of and by himself, for a beatifical union with the understanding, and from hence, with the heart and affections of men, error in things of this high and sacred import, can be nothing else but Satan, the great enemy of the peace and blessedness of men, contriving and distilling himself into a notion or impression apt and likely to be entertained and admitted by the understanding, under the appearance, and in the name of truth, into union with itself, and by means hereof, into union also with the heart and soul of men. Much in such a sense as that wherein the apostle affirmeth “Meats to be for the belly, and the belly again for meats,” 1 Cor. 6:13, is truth for the understanding, and the understanding for truth. And in such a sense as poisoned or unwholesome meats are not, nor ever were intended by God for the belly, nor the belly for them; it may truly be said, that error is not, nor was ever intended by God for the understanding, nor the understanding for error. Truth, or God issuing and streaming out his most excellent and incomprehensible nature and being, his infinite wisdom, knowledge, power, goodness, bounty, mercy, justice, &c. in certain positions, notions, and apprehensions, is of the most natural, kindly, and sovereign accommodation for the understandings of men, and dependently hereupon, for their hearts and affections also, that can be imagined. So that the belly is not, in the low way of nature appropriate unto it, better, or more naturally provided for and satisfied when filled with the best, and best nourishing meats; nor the body, or rest of the members, in a more ready, natural, and certain Way of well-doing



naturally, whilst the nourishment of these meats lasteth, and is regularly dispensed from the belly unto them, than the understanding of a man is, when invested, enriched, filled with supernatural and Divine truth; and whilst the knowledge and due consideration hereof there abideth, as far as the influence and sphere of the activeness of it extend, the heart, soul, and affections of men also are hereby enriched and filled with their appropriate treasures of righteousness, holiness, joy, and peace. Whereas error, and all mis-notions of God, his nature, attributes, counsels, or ways, though the mind and understanding of a man may rejoice over them for a season, yet do they all this while pollute, corrupt, and imbase them by their union and communion with them; as a person of a noble house and blood stains his honour and reputation, by coupling himself in marriage with a woman of base parentage and conditions. Yea, all error, of that kind whereof I now speak, being seated in the judgment and understanding, secretly and by degrees infuseth a proportionable malignity into the will and affections, and occasioneth sinful distempers, unholy and unworthy dispositions, to put forth here. The truth is, that error is the great troubler of the world; it is that fountain of death that issueth and sendeth out all those bitter waters, and streams of sin and unrighteousness in every kind, which overflow the earth almost in every place and part of it, making it so extremely barren of comfort and peace, as it is, yea and as the shadow of death, to the inhabitants of it. Why do men so universally walk in ways of oppression, extortion, deceit, covetousness, unmercifulness, drunkenness, uncleanness, envy, hatred, pride, ambition, &c., but because they judge such ways as these, all circumstances considered, more commodious and desirable unto them than ways and practices of a contrary, that is, of an holy and truly honourable import? And what is this but a most stupendous and horrid error and mistake, being the natural result of those numberless, erroneous, and lying apprehensions and conceits concerning God, wherewith men willingly suffer their minds and consciences to be imbascd and corrupted, even to a spiritual rottenness and putrefaction? For when God shall please to heal the world of all the malignity that yet boils and works in the bowels of it, and breaks out upon all occasions to the great annoyance and discontent of men, the receipt which he will administer unto it in order hereunto, is only the knowledge of himself, i. e. of the truth of his nature, attributes, and transcendant excellency of

being. This is the word of promise, which came long since from the mouth of God himself unto the world: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall *be full of the, knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. 11:9; clearly implying, that when ignorance and all mis- persuasions concerning God in the world shall be led captive by the light of the knowledge of the truth, and when there shall be a good understanding begotten between him and his creature, the hearts of men will serve them no longer to rebel against him, or to despise his laws. So that what is commonly said of knowledge, may truly be said of God; he hath no enemy, but only those who know him not. The devil had no door to open effectual enough, by which to give sin an entrance into the world, but only the perverting of the straight thoughts and apprehensions of God, which God himself had planted in the mind and understanding of his creature, man. The woman had a right and sound persuasion of the just severity and truth of God in his threatenings, until Satan prevailed with her to change it for a lie, Gen. 3:4, 5; into the spirit of which he Adam himself also was presently baptized by her confidence under it. Neither could the devil have touched either the one or the other of them, but by the mediation of some erroneous notion or other concerning God. And as Satan brought sin into the world by the opportunity of a misrepresentation of God unto his creature; so when God shall please to reform the world, and make a perfect ejection of sin out of it, he will do it by repairing the breaches which Satan hath made upon the judgments and understandings of men, with a clear light of the knowledge of himself. Well may the Holy Ghost call sin and wickedness in every kind the works of darkness, because they are never practised, hut by the illegal warrant and blind direction of some false persuasion or other in the minds of men. Upon this account also it is, that the apostle interpreteth the building of "timber, hay, and stubble," *i. e.* unsound doctrines and opinions, upon the true foundation, Jesus Christ, to be a corrupting, or destroying, of the temple of God [1Cor.3:7] (*i. e.* of his church and people, as he explaineth it.) For every error, or false apprehension, in the things of God, and matters of salvation, is not only of a defiling, but of a corrupting nature also; and according to the tenor and degree of malignity in it (for there is some degree of a spiritual malignity in every error) disposeth the soul which drinks it in, and converseth with it, to a spiritual death, being destructive to that

communion with God, wherein principally the life, *i. e.* the strength, peace, joy, and happiness of the soul consisteth. For God, in whatsoever he revealeth, or speaketh in his Word, of any inconsistency with an error (and error there is none about spiritual things, in opposition whereunto God speaketh not more or less in his Word) must needs be as a barbarian, or one that speaketh with an unknown tongue, to him whose mind and understanding is distempered with it. When our Saviour told his disciples, (in words express and plain enough,) that “the Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men,” Luke 9:44, and 18:34, it is said, that “they,” notwithstanding, “understood not the saying.” The reason plainly was, because they were erroneously principled about the subject of which Christ spake, which was his estate of humiliation by suffering death ; they supposing and taking it for granted, that he was to be a great potentate and monarch in the world, without passing through the valley of an ignominious death thereunto. In like manner when he said to Joseph and the virgin his mother, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Luke 2:49, the text saith, “they understood not the saying that he spake unto them.” The reason of their non-understanding in this case was because they were under the command of such a supposition, which thwarted that principle, according to the exigency whereof he so spake. They supposed that he was under no engagement, in no due capacity, at least at those years, which at this time he had attained, to manage the great affairs of God and his kingdom in the world: whereas his sense was, that he was under the one, and in the other; and spake accordingly unto them. So also the reason why Festus supposed “Paul to be beside himself, and that much learning had made him mad,” Acts 26:24, (implying that he could make neither sap nor sense of what he had said,) was because the tenor and substance of Paul’s discourse was diametrically opposite to his principles. After the same manner, when and whilst a man’s judgment is perverted by any unsound opinion that hath taken fast hold on it, he is incapable of all that light of truth which God shineth in the Scriptures in opposition to that error, and must, of necessity, either relinquish this opinion, or else, either deprave and misunderstand the mind of God in all such passages, or profess dissatisfaction touching the true sense and meaning of them. In both cases he suffers a proportionable loss in his communion with God. “Can two walk together,” saith the Scripture, “except they be agreed?” Civil

communion cannot be maintained or held, under a dissent in principles relating to such communion, at least not in such things unto which such a dissent extendeth or relateth. Beasts are incapable of all friendly converse and intercourse of affairs with men, and so men with beasts. The reason is, because neither of them have any principles symbolical with the other: the thoughts of men are not the thoughts of beasts, neither are the thoughts or impressions of beasts the thoughts of men. And though men being sound in some sovereign principles of the gospel, and such which are, as it were, the lifeguard of the heart and vital parts of religion, may possibly live in communion with God upon terms consistent with salvation; yet may they very possibly also, in case they be entangled with error otherwise, by means hereof suffer loss to a very sad degree in the things of their present peace. "When the sun is in the greatest eclipse that is lightly incident to it, there yet shineth so much light to the world which is sufficient to make it day, and whereby to perform ordinary works wont to be done in the day time: notwithstanding during such an eclipse as this, the world, through want of that fulness of light which that worthy creature, the sun, naturally affordeth, suffereth many degrees of the damp and sadness of the night. In like manner, though the light of God's countenance may shine in the face of the soul to such a degree as to make a day of grace and favourable acceptance with him, notwithstanding the interposition of a dark cloud of many errors: yet most certain it is that according to the compass and proportion of such a cloud, and during the interposition of it, the soul will be apt to suffer now and then many grudgings and sad impressions of a fear of being rejected by him. There is no ray or beam which naturally shineth from the face of God, but the interception, deprivation, and want of it must needs prove both poena damni, yea, and poena sensus too, upon occasion, unto the soul. Yea, the Scripture itself supposeth men that are ignorant in anything relating to their spiritual affairs (and much more such as are confidently, *i. e.* erroneously ignorant) to be in a deplorable and sad condition; and the proper objects of pity and compassion, in case their ignorance, or error, be not affectate, and such, from the entanglement and pollution whereof they had competent means to have delivered themselves. [Epiphan] The apostle maketh it a worthy character of an "High Priest taken from amongst men, to be able to have *compassion on the ignorant*, and such as are out of the way," Heb. 5:2. There are but two things that can make

the condition of a creature miserable, sin and sufferings; and both these are the unquestionable fruits or productions of error. Lusts and sinful distempers can be nowhere engendered, but only in the dark regions of the soul: the shining of the light of the truth is as the shadow of death unto them. Nor can fear that hath torment, nor any afflicting or sad impression upon the spirits of men, climb up into the bed of the soul, to disturb the rest and sweet peace of it, but only in the night of ignorance, and by the opportunity of error lodging there. The light of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, is unto fears, agonies, and all perplexity of spirit, like unto Solomon's King sitting upon his throne of judgment, in reference to wicked men, whom he scattereth or chaseth away with his eyes, Prov. 20:8. "The truth," saith Christ unto the Jews, meaning, when known by them, "shall make you free," John 8:32. All bondage and servility, whether under sin or under sorrow, is dissolved by the clear shining of the light of the knowledge of God into the heart and soul: whereas the darkness of error strengtheneth the hand of the oppressors, and binds fast the iron yoke of servitude upon the necks of those that are in bondage. The time would fail me to speak at large of all the sad retinue of evils and mischiefs that attend upon error. Take in brief the sum, as well of what I have said, as what I would willingly say yet further, upon this account.

**First,** It hath been said, that error defileth and imbaseth the person who coupleth his judgment with it.

**Secondly,** That it obstructeth communion with God, as far as the malignity of the influence of it extendeth.

**Thirdly,** That the proper and direct tendency of it, is unto death, to bring everlasting destruction upon the soul.

**Fourthly,** It hath been shown, that error is the proper element for jim and ojim, and doleful creatures; I mean, for fears, sad apprehensions, disconsolate thoughts, on the one hand, and so for wild satyrs, lusts, sensual, and sinful distempers on the other hand, to be engendered and bred, as also to live and subsist, to move, and act, and take their pastime in; the knowledge of the truth being mortal unto both. I now add,

**Fifthly,** That error disposeth the soul to apostasy from the gospel, and to a recidivation or falling back into the devouring sin of unbelief. This it doth not only by giving opportunity and encouragement unto lusts, and inordinate affections in the soul, the motions and actings of which are to

the life of faith that which poison is to the natural life of a man; but also by representing the gospel unto the mind and conscience of a man, (at least in some of the ways and passages of it,) as weak, unworthy, dark, unpleasant, uncouth, or whatsoever error, when the soul by long acquaintance and converse with it shall discover the true nature or genius of it, and so grow into a dislike and contempt of it, shall now appear unto them. For this is much to be considered, that a man, or woman, who have for many years professed the gospel, may in process of time come to discover vanity in some erroneous principle or tenet, wherewith their judgments had been leavened for some considerable space formerly, and so grow into a disapprobation or contempt of it, and yet may very possibly think and suppose, that the gospel favours or countenanceth it, and that otherwise they should never have owned or approved it. Now when a person shall be brought into the snare of such a conceit or imagination as this, that the gospel in some of the veins or carriages of it teacheth or asserteth things that are vain, or of no good consistency with reason or truth, he is in a ready posture to throw off from his soul all credence of the Divine authority of the gospel, and to esteem it no better than a fable devised by men. Nor will all that which he judgeth serious, and sound, and good in the doctrine of the gospel otherwise, relieve him in such a case. He that imagines that he smells but so much as one dead fly in the ointment of the gospel, will, as he should have sufficient cause to do, were his imagination in this case sufficiently grounded, conclude, that certainly it came not from God, but from men. No man's heart or conscience will serve him to reverence that, as coming from God, wherein he savours the least weakness, error, or untruth.

**Sixthly,** Though an error seems to be merely speculative, and in respect of the frame and constitution of it, to have no affinity or intermeddling at all with the moral principles, or practices of men, as that of anabaptism, amongst some others, yet doth it secretly, and in a collateral way, through the weakness and vanity of the heart, infuse malignity even into these; occasioning persons, otherwise grave, sober, peaceable, meek, loving, &c., to break out many times in strains of pride, self-conceitedness, contention, contempt of others, cavilling against pregnant and clear truths, with the like, for the maintenance and defence of it. For as he which hath a child, though it be never so hard-favoured or deformed, never so ill-behaved or conditioned, yet judgeth himself

bound to provide maintenance and support for it: so he that embraceth an opinion about the things of God, and of the gospel, be it never so erroneous, uncouth, irrational, and weak, yet supposeth himself bound in conscience to plead the cause of it, and protect it, upon all occasions. Now it being impossible that any man, of what gifts, parts, or learning soever, should be able to maintain or make good the cause of a weak or erroneous opinion, especially against an adversary of equal abilities and insight into the cause with himself, by solidity, pregnancy, or clearness of argument, whether from the Scripture, or otherwise; hence it frequently cometh to pass, that when the patrons of such a cause fall short in their intellectuals, and sobriety of discourse, to keep the head of it above water, they supply that which is wanting in their judgments and understandings, with that which aboundeth (upon such a temptation) in their wills and affections, I mean with passion and with unworthy and reproachful vilifications, either of the persons of their adversaries, for not concurring in judgment with them, or of their arguments, which they are not able in a rational, sober, or Christian way to answer.

**Seventhly**, (that which is of some affinity with the former particular,) Error in sensu composite, and whilst a man is resolved to stand by it, subjecteth him to this hard and miserable necessity, either to profess himself wilful in the holding of it, as not being able to give any reason or account unto others why he holdeth it; or else to rise up in his might to resist and oppose the mind and truth of God in all those passages of Scripture, (with arguments built thereon,) which shall be pertinently alleged and insisted upon to detect the vanity and falsehood of his opinion. Of what sad consequence, either the one or the other of these are like to prove, reader, it is referred to thy serious and Christian thoughts to consider.

**Eighthly**, He that is a servant in his judgment and conscience unto error, is, during this his servile condition, utterly incapable of that rich and sweet privilege of perfect and entire union with the saints, which the Lord Christ a little before his death so earnestly solicited his Father, that all that believe in him might be invested with and partake. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” And again, “That they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect

in one,” &c. John 17:20, 21, &c. Suppose all the saints at this day alive upon the face of the earth, should accord and be one in judgment about any error, though otherwise their accord should be most entire, as well in affection as in all spiritual and Divine truth, yet this would not amount to that union, to that being made perfect in one, which the great Peacemaker of the world so earnestly desired of his Father on their behalf. Agreement in error, in whomsoever, is no union in Christ, but a conspiracy against him. Therefore in case any believer, or number of believers, shall lie under the pollution of any error, they become hereby, until their cleansing, incapable of having part or fellowship in that great and blessed business of perfect union in Christ with the saints. Yea, unless we shall suppose that there is an universal conspiracy amongst the saints against Christ, in that very error which cleaveth to our judgments under the name and appearance of truth, (which is a case of the highest unlikelihood that lightly can be supposed,) we are incapable, during the continuance of the said error in us, of a thorough and perfect accord with the saints, even in that wherein they are one, in and with Christ himself. Yea in case we shall seek union with the saints by soliciting and persuading them to come over unto us in our judgments, in case they be erroneous, we shall spread a snare of darkness and of death in their way; and so shall be agents and factors for Satan and for hell, whilst we please ourselves with a conceit of agency for God and Jesus Christ. How many ministers of the gospel, and others, are there amongst us at this day, who are deep in this condemnation? My meaning all along this discourse hath not been, as if I supposed all errors to be alike dangerous, or all pernicious and destructive to the souls of men upon any such terms, that he that lives and dies in any of them must needs perish. No; as the apostle, speaking of the stars of heaven, saith, that “One star differeth from another star in glory,” 1 Cor. 15:41, so is it true amongst errors, one error differeth from another in shame and in danger. Nevertheless, as all distempers, sicknesses, and diseases in the body, are of one and the same inclination and tendency, the faces of them all are set towards the death and dissolution thereof, though many of them prove not mortal in the event, as some of them do, being either outgrown and overcome by the strength of nature, or else opposed in their course by exercise, physic, or the like, and the body by these means is delivered from the inconvenience and danger of them: in like manner all errors, without exception, have



more or less of a spiritual malignancy in them, and are all contrary to the comfort, life, and peace of the precious souls of men, although it is true there are many that never come actually to destroy either the peace or life of these souls, being either timeously discovered by men, and so cut off from their judgments, or otherwise balanced and corrected by worthy and rich principles of evangelical truth, that the presence of them doth not much influence or annoy the soul.

**Ninthly**, another soul-calamity occasioned by error, is, there being such concatenations and mutual involutions of errors, one within another, a man cannot be engaged in his judgment unto any one, but hereby he makes himself a debtor to own and maintain, upon occasion, the whole tribe and family of errors, whereof this is a member, or else he must represent himself as a man inconsistent with himself, and prevaricating with his own principles. Which of the two to choose, will, I suppose, put a person truly ingenuous and considerate, almost into as great a strait as David was in, when he was necessitated by God to choose one of those three sore judgments mentioned 2 Sam. 24:13. Scarce can there an error be named, which hath not a great train and retinue, some before and some behind, of the same house and family attending upon it, and linked in a rational confederacy with it; according to that common saying, let one absurdity be granted, and a thousand more will follow of course. So that, as Paul told the Galatians, that if they were circumcised, they hereby became debtors to keep the whole law, meaning, if they meant to be uniform, and rationally consistent with themselves; in like manner, a man, by embracing one error, undertakes for all of the same cognation and line, otherwise exposing himself to the disparagement and dishonour of a man of a distracted and broken judgment. As, for example, he that is entangled with the error of those who deny the lawfulness of infant baptism, stands obliged, through his engagement to this one error, to maintain and make good these, and many the like erroneous and anti-evangelical opinions ; 1. That God was more gracious to infants under the law, than now he is under the gospel; or, which is every whit as hard a saying as this, that his vouchsafement of circumcision unto them, under the law, was no argument or sign at all of any grace or favour from him unto them. Yea, 2. That God more regarded, and made more liberal provision for the comfort and satisfaction of typical believers, though formal and express unbelievers, in and about the spiritual condition of

their children, under the law, than he does for the truest, soundest, and greatest believers, under the gospel; or, which is of a like notorious import, that the ordinance of God for the circumcising of infants under the law, was of no accommodation or concernment for the comfort of the parents, touching the spiritual condition of their children. 3. That the children of true believers under the gospel, are more unworthy, more unmeet, less capable subjects of baptism, than the children of the Jews were of circumcision under the law; or, which is of like uncouth notion, that God accepted the persons of the children of the Jews, though unbelievers, and rejects the persons of the children of believers under the gospel, from the same or the like grace, these being under no greater guilt or demerit than those other. 4. That baptism succeedeth not in the place, office, or service of circumcision. 5. That when the initiatory sacrament was more grievous and burthensome, in the letter of it, God ordered the application of it unto children; but after he made a change of it for that which is more gracious, and much more accommodate to the tenderness and weakness of children, as baptism clearly is, in respect of circumcision, he hath wholly excluded children from it. 6. That it was better and more edifying unto men under the law, to receive the pledge of God's fatherly love and care over them, whilst they were yet children; and that now it is worse, or less edifying to men, to receive it at the same time, and better and more edifying unto them to receive it afterwards, as, viz. when they come to years of discretion. 7. That men are wiser, and more providential than God, as, viz. in debarring or keeping children from baptism for fear of such and such inconveniences, when as God by no law, or prohibition of his, interposeth against their baptizing, nor yet insisteth upon, or mentioneth, the least inconvenience any ways likely to come upon either the persons of the children themselves, nor upon the churches of Christ, hereby. 8. And, lastly, (to pass by many other tenets and opinions, every whit as exorbitant from the truth, and as untenable as these, which yet must be maintained by those who suffer their judgments to be encumbered with the error of antipaedobaptism, unless they will say and unsay, deny in the consequent, what they affirm and grant in the antecedent,) and that which is more than what hath been said yet; they must, upon the account of their enthrallment under the said error, maintain many uncouth, harsh, irrational, venturous, and daring interpretations and expositions of many texts and passages of Scripture,

and particularly of these, Gen. 17: 7 ; 1 Cor. 7: 14; Acts 2: 39, and 16:15 ; 1 Cor. 1:16; 1 Cor. 10:2 ; besides many others, which frequently upon occasion are argued in way of defence and proof of the lawfulness of infant baptism. Now as the Greek epigram maketh it the highway to beggary, to have many bodies to feed, and many houses to build, so may it truly enough be said, that for a professor of Christianity to have many errors to maintain, and many rotten opinions to build up, is the next way to bring him to a morsel of bread, not only in his name and reputation amongst intelligent men, but also in the goodness of his heart and conscience towards God. Nor is it of much more desirable an interpretation, for such a man to appear distracted in his principles, or divided in himself.

**Tenthly**, and lastly, error is in this respect also of very sad portendance unto men, viz. because being once entered within the doors of a man's judgment, it commonly bewitcheth the person with such an adulterous affection towards itself, that his foot is very hardly recoverable out of the snare. There is no error but at one turn or other, either directly or indirectly, gratifieth the flesh, or that which remains of the old man in men. Now the flesh in all men is very loath to part with any of her benefactors; to be despoiled of any principle, which speaks to her heart in any matter of ease, pleasure, honour, profit, or the like. Upon this account it cometh to pass, that error is so readily, and sometimes even greedily, entertained, and with so much difficulty, and conflicting with the judgments and consciences of men, cast out. "None," saith Solomon, speaking of the harlot, "that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life," Prov. ii. 19. They are not many, who having once turned aside into error, return back again into the way of truth, when once they have forsaken it. Such persons commonly prove [GREEK WORD HERE] as the philosopher speaks, *i. e.* stout and stiff in their opinions, and men that will stand fast in their conceits. And, as another expresseth their genius, they will have that to be truth which they hold, but they will not hold that which is truth. Yea, a great part of those whose judgments and consciences are enthralled under error, and this of a very sad and dangerous import, are yet so superstitiously fearful to make use of those means which God hath expressly prescribed and enjoined for their deliverance, that they make it matter of conscience to refrain from hearing such teachers, and so from reading such books, and admitting

such discourses, whereby their judgments might be healed, and themselves made sound in the faith. Error in this case is so full of a pestilential malignity to the soul, that whereas God hath commanded men to try all things, that so they may be in a capacity to hold fast that which is good, they, on the contrary, resolve to hold fast at peradventure that which they have, and to make no trial at all, whether it be good or no.

The premises concerning the fierce and bloody war, wherein error fights against the soul, considered, it cannot seem strange unto us, that the great lover of the peace and prosperity of souls, Jesus Christ, blessed forever, should pour out his heart and soul unto men so abundantly, as he hath done in the gospel, in cautions, admonitions, directions, threatenings, promises, almost without end, that so, by one means or other, they might be effectually prevailed with, to use all diligence to keep themselves unspotted of such errors, which he knew the great enemy of their peace would be industriously diligent to spread and scatter up and down the world in all ages. “Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world,” 1 John 4:1. So, again, Try, or “prove, all things,” *i. e.* all doctrines and sayings of men, “hold fast that which is good,” 1 Thess. 5:21. Again, “Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also being led away with *the error* of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness,” &c. 2 Pet. 3:17. Of like notion whereunto is that of another apostle:

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God,” Heb. 3:12. An evil heart of unbelief is never contracted, but by suffering erroneous conceits, and false persuasions concerning God, to grow upon our judgments, and corrupt them. The same apostle again: “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines,” Heb. 13:9. Elsewhere: “That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,” Ephes. 4:14. Again: “Let no man deceive you with vain words,” Ephes. 5:6. So, “Be not deceived,” 1 Cor. 6:9. “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit,” &c. Coloss. 2:8. “These things,” saith John, “I have written unto you concerning those that deceive you,” 1 John 2:26, or seduce you, *i. e.* that endeavour to seduce or deceive you. The Lord Christ himself cautioneth his disciples, and in them others, ex

abundanti, against false Christs and false prophets, who, as he saith, “should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect,” Matt. 24:24. This operous and abundant interposure of the Holy Ghost, for ten times more of like consideration might be added, in all variety of applications unto men, which are any ways conducing to the preserving of men’s judgments free, and their minds pure from error, doth with a great pregnancy of conviction argue and suppose, that errors and false conceptions in matters of religion, are of a most formidable and dangerous consequence to the precious souls of men. Far he it from any man to imagine, that the Holy Ghost should, according to the proverb, thus labour about the lifting of a feather, or be solicitous at that high rate, which hath been expressed, to prevent the lighting of a grasshopper upon the earth, where it can do little or no harm.

The second thing, good reader, wherewith I desire to possess and fill thee, judgment and conscience, heart and soul, and all that is within thee, to strengthen thy hand to a diligent perusal of the treatise ensuing, is the high necessity that lieth upon thee, as it doth upon all the world besides respectively, to awake, raise, and engage all those worthy faculties and endowments which God hath vested in thee, reason, judgment, memory, understanding, about the things of thine eternal peace; and because this iron, I fear, hath been of late much blunted with the earthly conceits and suggestions of many, I am desirous to put so much the more strength to it. But to me it is the first-born of wonder and astonishment, that, amongst men professing the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the wisdom of God, yea, amongst the teachers themselves of this wisdom, men should be found who think they do God and men very good service in persuading men wholly to lay aside their reasons, judgments, understandings in matters of religion, and not to make use of or engage any of these in their inquiries after matters of a spiritual or supernatural concernment. Doubtless, Satan is a debtor to those persons who have seasoned the world with the unsavoury salt of such a principle as this, for all the religious respects and high entertainments that have of late been given by many amongst us,—to all those wicked, senseless, sapless, hideous, and blasphemous doctrines and opinions which, like the dead frogs of Egypt, Exod. 8:14, make the land to stink. For, if men may not interpose with their reasons and judgments to distinguish between spirit and spirit,

opinion and opinion, why should not one spirit be believed as well as another, and one opinion received as well as another? Or, if the difference be not to be made by the interposure and exercise of reason in a man, I demand by what other principle or means ought it to be made? If it be said, Partly by the word of God, and partly by the Spirit of God, I answer,

1. Concerning the word of God, it is acknowledged that this is to be in a special manner interested in all our dijudications between doctrine and doctrine, opinion and opinion, in matters of religion, and that this is the fire which must try every man's work, of what sort it is, 1 Cor. 3:13, and that must separate the vile from the precious. But as the plummet and rule do not measure the work of the architect, or discover whether it be true and square or otherwise, of or by themselves, but as they are regularly applied hereunto either by the workman himself or some other capable of making such an application, for however true the work may be, a sufficient test or proof of the work cannot be made without the use of the plummet and rule about it; in like manner, though the word of God be of sovereign use and necessity for the measuring of opinions and doctrines, and for the discovery of what is straight and what crooked in them, yet he that desires to reap the spiritual benefit and advantage of the usefulness of it in this kind, must, first, rightly understand the sense and mind of God in it, and, secondly, be dexterous and expert in making a due application of it, being rightly understood, to the doctrines or opinions the soundness or unsoundness whereof he desires to understand by it; for it is not the letter or form of words, as separated or considered apart from the spirit, notion, or sense of them, that is the touchstone or rule of trial for doctrines: yea, the letter and words are only servants to the sense and notion which they contain and exhibit, and were principally, if not only, delivered by the Holy Ghost unto men for this end, that by them the sense, mind, and counsel of God, in all the particularities of them which are held forth in the Scripture, might be communicated and conveyed to the reasons and understandings of men. So that in case a man had the sense and mind of God upon the same terms of certainty and knowledge, without the letter, on which he hath it or may have it by means of the letter, he should be as richly, as completely qualified hereby to discern between doctrines as he now can be by the opportunity and advantage of the letter. Now, if the Scriptures themselves be upon no other terms, nor in any other case, serviceable or useful unto men for the trial of doctrines

and opinions, but only as and when they are truly understood by them, it clearly follows that whatsoever is requisite and necessary to bring men to a true understanding of the Scriptures, is of equal necessity for the distinguishing of doctrines, and to interpose or be made use of in all affairs and concernments in religion. If, then, the reasons, judgments, and understandings of men must of necessity interpose, act, argue, debate, and consider before the true sense and mind of God in any Scripture can be duly apprehended, understood, and believed by men, it is a plain case that these are to be used, and to be interested in whatsoever is of any religious consequence or concernment to us. That the mind of God in the Scriptures cannot be duly apprehended, received, or believed by men, but by the acting and working of their reasons, minds, and understandings, in order hereunto, is evident from hence, viz., because the mind of God cannot be thus apprehended or believed by men but by means of an intellectual or rational difference tasted or resented by them between this mind of his and all other minds, meanings, or senses whatsoever that may be supposed to lie or reside in the words. For example : if there be another sense to be given of such or such a passage of Scripture, either contrary to or differing from that which I conceive to be the mind of God here, which hath the same rational or intellectual savour and taste with this, that is, which as well suits with the words, agrees with the context, falls in with the scope and subject-matter in hand, is as accordable with Scripture assertion elsewhere, comports as clearly with the unquestionable principles of reason, and the like, how is it possible for me in this case to conceive or believe, especially with the certainty of faith, that my sense is the mind of God, and consequently the true sense of that place, rather than that other which hath all the same characters, symptoms, and arguments of being the mind of God which mine hath? Therefore it must needs be by the exercise and acting of my reason and understanding, and by the report which they make of their discoveries in their inquiries, that I come regularly to conclude and to be satisfied that this is the mind of God in such or such a scripture, and none other.

If it be here objected and demanded, But is it meet or tolerable that the reason of man should judge in the things of God? or that the understandings of men should umpire and determine in his affairs? I answer,

1. If God pleaseth to impart his mind and counsels in words and writing unto men, with an injunction and charge that they receive and own them as from him, and that they take heed that they do not mistake him, or embrace either their own conceits or the minds of others instead of his, in this case for men to put a difference, by way of judging and discerning between the mind of God and that which is not his mind, is so far from being an act of authority, presumption, or unseemly usurpation in men, that it is a fruit of their deep loyalty, submission, and obedience unto God. When Christ enjoined the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians to “render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things which are God’s,” Matt. 22:21, he did not only give them a warrant and commission to judge and determine what and which were the things of God, as well as which were the things of Caesar, but laid a charge upon them also to put this warrant in execution, and this not only by judging actually which were the things of God, but by practising and acting also upon and according to this judgment.

2. To judge of God and of the things of God in the sense we now speak, is but to acknowledge, own, and reverence God and the things of God in their transcendent excellency, goodness, and truth, and as differenced in their perfections respectively from all other beings and things. The poorest and meanest subject that is may lawfully and without any just offence judge his prince, yea, or him that is made a lawful judge over him, to be wise, just, bountiful, &c., at least when there is sufficient ground for it.

If it be yet further demanded, But is the reason or understanding of a man competent to judge of the things of God, as, for example, to determine and conclude what is the mind of God in such or such a passage of Scripture, or in such and such a case? Doth not the Scripture, speaking of men in their natural condition, call them darkness, Ephes. 5:8, affirming likewise that “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not,” John 1:5; and elsewhere doth it not inform us that “the natural man perceiveth” or receiveth “not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?” 1Cor. 2:14. And how many heathen philosophers, heretics and others, undertaking to judge of the things of God in the Gospel by the light and strength of their own reasons and understandings, have miscarried, to the everlasting perdition



of their own souls, and, as is much to be feared, of many others also? To all this I answer by degrees.

**First.** It is a thing as unquestionable as that the sun is up at noonday, that reason and understanding in men are competent to judge of the things of God, at least of some, yea, of many of them, or rather, indeed, of all that are contained in the Scriptures, according to the degree of their discovery and manifestation there; for, doth not God himself own them in this capacity when he appeals and refers himself unto them in several of his great and important affairs, authorizing them to judge in the case between him and his adversaries? “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, *judge*, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it ?” Isa. 5:3, 4. So again, “Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal ?” Ezek. 18:25, 29. Yet again, in the same chapter, “O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal ?” In these and such like appeals, he supposeth the persons appealed unto to be as capable, or, however, as well capable, of the equity and righteousness of his ways, and consequently to be in a regular capacity of justifying him, as of the unworthiness and unrighteousness of their ways, against whom he standeth in the contest. So our Saviour to the chief priests and elders, in his parable: “When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he” (or rather, what shall he) “do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their season,” Matt. 21:40, 41. We see these priests and elders, though men of great unworthiness otherwise, and far from believing in Christ, were yet able to award a righteous judgment, and such as our Saviour himself approved, yea and put in execution not long after, between him and his husbandmen. So in another place to the hypocritical Jews: “Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth? but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea and why even of (or from) “ yourselves judge ye not what is right ?” Luke 12:56, 57. In which passage, among other things, he clearly implieth these two: 1. That had they set their minds upon things that most concerned them, they were in a sufficient capacity, by the direction and help of those characters and signs which their own prophets had long before delivered, clearly to have discerned, that the days and times in which they now lived

were indeed the days of their Messiah. 2. That, from themselves, *i. e.* out of natural and inbred principles, whereby they were enabled to judge of things commodious and expedient for them in like cases, they were in a capacity to have come to this issue and conclusion; that it was now high time to compromise that great and weighty controversy, which of a long time had been depending between God and them by repentance. The apostle Paul willeth the Corinthians, in one place, to judge of what he saith, 1 Cor. 10:15; in another, he directeth that in their church meetings the prophets should speak two or three, and that the rest should *judge*, 1 Cor. 14:29. In both which places he clearly supposeth in them a competency of judicature or discerning about spiritual things. And when in his defence before Agrippa, he demands of him, and the rest that were present, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26:8, he clearly supposeth that the resurrection itself of the dead, which yet is one of the great and deep mysteries of the gospel, was nothing but what they, consulting with the light of reason and understanding in themselves (for they were not supernaturally enlightened) might judge probable enough, and no ways unlike to be effected. When God commands, and calls upon “all men everywhere to repent,” Acts 17:30, and so to believe, 1 John 3:23, he must either suppose them in a capacity to distinguish and discern between the things whereof he would have them repent, and the things of which he would not have them repent, and so between what he would have them to believe, and what not; or else speak unto them as no otherwise capable of such his commands, than the stones on the earth, or beasts of the field. And how then is “the commandment holy, and just, and good?” Therefore certainly those noble faculties and endowments of reason and understanding in men, as they are sustained, supported, and assisted by the Spirit of God in the generality of men, are in a capacity of apprehending, discerning, understanding the things of God in the gospel. Yea and evident it is from the Scriptures, that men act beneath themselves, are remiss and slothful in awakening those principles of light and understanding that are vested in their natures, or else willingly choke, suppress, and smother them, if they remain in the snare of unbelief. “Pray for us,” saith Paul to the Thessalonians, “that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men: for all men have not faith,” 2 Thess. 3:2. By unreasonable (or, as the word signifieth, absurd) and evil

men he plainly meaneth, not men who naturally, or in actu primo were unreasonable (such as these were not like to endanger him, or to obstruct the course of the gospel) but such as were unreasonable in, *i. e.* persons who acted contrary to the light and principles of reason, and hereby became, industriously evil or wicked. That there were such persons as these abroad in the world, he gives this account, “for all men have not faith which clearly implieth that men who act and quit themselves according to the true principles of that reason, which God hath planted in them, cannot but believe, and be partakers in the precious faith of the gospel. To this purpose that passage in Chrysostom is memorably worthy: “As to believe (the gospel) is the part of a raised and nobly ingenuous soul; so, on the contrary, not to believe, is the property of a soul most unreasonable, and unworthy, and depressed, or bowed down, to the sottishness of brute beasts.” Therefore,

**Secondly,** Whereas it was objected that men in their natural estates are by the Scriptures termed darkness, and in this respect presented as unable to comprehend the light of the gospel, I answer, There is in the controversies about the extent and efficacy of the grace of God vouchsafed unto men, as great an abuse of the word natural, (and so of the word supernatural, a term not found in the scriptures, either formally or virtually,) as there is of the word orthodox in this and many others. The Scripture knoweth not the word natural in any such sense or signification, wherein it should express or distinguish the unregenerate estate of a man from the regenerate. Our translators indeed render (in the scripture adjoining, of which a touch presently) the natural man; hut quo jure, nondum liquet. And however, the whole carriage of the context round about maketh it as clear as the light (as I have elsewhere argued and proved at large) that it is not the unregenerate man, but the weak Christian, that is there spoken of and termed, as a little after, in the same contexture of discourse, he is termed, carnal, and, a babe or youngling in Christ. If therefore by the natural estate of men the objection meaneth the unregenerate estate of men according to the whole compass and extent of it, and under all the differences which it admitteth, I absolutely deny that the Scripture anywhere termeth natural men darkness. Those Ephesians, of whom the apostle saith, they were sometime darkness, had been not only or simply unregenerate, but had walked in sins and trespasses, according to the course of this world, and after the prince that ruleth in

the air, the spirit that worketh effectually in the children of disobedience, by whom their understandings had been darkened, and they possessed with many false, wicked, and blasphemous conceits concerning God and the gospel, &c. All which imply an unregenerate estate most dangerously encumbered, and from whence it argued the high and signal grace and favour of God that ever they should be delivered. The Jews also (John 1:5) are termed darkness upon a like account, viz., because they were strongly and desperately prejudiced and prepossessed with erroneous notions and conceits against Christ, and about the estate of their Messiah at his first coming unto them; whom they expecting in the form of a great monarch, rejected and crucified in the form of a servant. It was this darkness which they had through an oscitant, loose, and sensual converse with their own Scriptures, voluntarily suffered to grow and spread itself upon the face of their minds and understandings, that was a snare upon them, and occasioned the sad event here mentioned, viz., that when the light shone unto them (*i. e.* when sufficient and pregnant means were vouchsafed unto them to have brought them to the acknowledgment of their Messiah,) they comprehended it not, *i. e.* did not by the means of it come to see and understand that, for the sight and knowledge whereof it was given them. For that, by the way, is to be observed, that the evangelist doth not say, that the darkness in which the light shined could not, or was not able, to comprehend it, hut only that it did not comprehend it. Now it is a known principle in reason, that “a negatione actus, ad negationem potentiae, non valet argumentum.” There may be a defect in action, or performance, where there is no defect of power for action. And the very observation and report which the evangelist maketh of the non-comprehension of the light by the darkness in which it shone, plainly enough imports, that the defectiveness of this darkness in not comprehending the light did not consist in, or proceed from, any natural or invincible want of power to comprehend it, but from a blindness voluntarily contracted, and willingly, if not wilfully, persisted in. For how can it be reasonably supposed that this evangelist, who flyeth an higher pitch than his fellows, in drawing up his evangelical tidings for the use and benefit of the world, should, in the very entrance of his gospel, and whilst he was thundering out on high (as one of the fathers speaks) the divinity of Christ, insert the relation of a thing that had nothing strange, nothing more than of common and ordinary observation in it? Or is it

anything more than ordinary, or what is most obvious, that men do not fly in the air like birds, or that fishes do not speak on the earth like men? Or is it a thing of any whit a more savoury consideration than these, that men void of all capacity, destitute of all power, to comprehend the light, should not comprehend it? But that there should be a generation of men whom it so infinitely concerned to comprehend the light, to acknowledge and own their Messiah being now come unto them, and who withal had a rich sufficiency of means to have done the one and the other, should notwithstanding be so stupid and unlike men as not to comprehend this light, not to acknowledge or own this their Messiah, is a matter of high admiration and astonishment, and the mention of it very commodious and proper for that subject of discourse, which the Holy Ghost had now in hand, as might be showed more at large, but that I fear the reader hath already more than his burden of an epistle.

**Thirdly**, Concerning that scripture, 1 Cor. 2:14, “ But the natural man perceiveth not,” &c., if, reader, thou conceivest there is anything in it spoken with any intent to disable reason or understanding in man, so far as to divest them of all capacity or power for the apprehending, conceiving, or believing any of the things of God, yea, or particularly of such of the things of God the discerning and believing whereof is of absolute necessity for salvation, thou mayest, if thou pleasest, deliver thy judgment from the mistake by the perusal of a few pages in a discourse formerly published, [*Novice Presbyter*, p. 86, 87, 89, &c.] where thou wilt find this passage of Scripture opened at large, and driven home to its issue. Here I clearly demonstrate these three things:

1. That the place speaketh not of the natural, *i. e.*, of the unregenerate man, but of the weak Christian, the babe in Christ.
2. That the things of God here spoken of are not such things the knowledge or discerning whereof is of absolute necessity to salvation, but the high or deep things of God, of the true and worthy discerning of which only the spiritual man, *i. e.*, the strong and well-grown Christian, is *de praesenti* and immediately capable.
3. And lastly, that the incapacity of these things of God, which is here asserted to be in the natural man or weak Christian, is not an utter or absolute incapacity, or such which, by a diligent use of means, he may not very possibly, and according to the ordinary course of Providence, outgrow, but only a present or actual incapacity or indisposition, which is regularly, and, as it were, of course, curable. These

things I there evince from the express tenor and carnage of the context.

**Fourthly** and lastly, to the objection concerning heathen philosophers, heretics, and others of great parts and natural endowments of reason, wit, understanding, &c., who either rejected the gospel as a fable, as the philosophers, or else perverted and wrested the truth thereof in many things to their own destruction, and, possibly, to the destruction of others as heretics; I answer, When I affirm and teach that reason, or the intellectual part of a man, is competent to apprehend, discern, subscribe unto, the things of God and of the gospel, my meaning is not to affirm withal that therefore men of these endowments, though ever so excellently enriched with them, must of necessity apprehend, discern, or subscribe unto these things. Reason and understanding, even of the greatest advance in men, will serve men for other ends and purposes besides the apprehension and discerning of the things of God in the gospel, and may accordingly be improved and employed by them; yea, they may be employed against the gospel, and made to war and fight against the truth of it. It is a saying of known truth concerning all things that have not an essential connexion with a man's sovereign good,

**Nothing there is so profitable,  
But to do mischief is as able.**

Because some men suffer themselves to be bewitched with a corrupt desire of "drawing away disciples after them," and for the fulfilling of such a lust, "speak perverse things," Acts 20:30, as the apostle speaketh; it doth not follow from hence that therefore they were in no capacity or in no possibility of speaking the truth and refraining from the teaching of perverse things. Aristotle, speaking of riches, saith that "it is impossible that he should have them who takes no care to have them." So are we to conceive of the knowledge and true discerning of the things of God in the gospel: in what capacity soever men are, either for abilities, or means otherwise for obtaining them, it is impossible that ever they should actually attain them unless they be careful, and shall bend the strength of their minds and understandings in order to the attainment of them. Now, the heathen philosophers, more generally, became vain in their imaginations, Rom. 1:21, as the apostle speaketh ; i. e., they spent themselves, the strength of their parts, time, and opportunities upon

matters of a low or secondary concernment, and which they apprehended to have a more ready and certain connexion with their own honour and esteem amongst men; and did not charge themselves, their gifts, or parts with that worthy and blessed design which the apostle calls the having of God in acknowledgment. Upon this their unnatural unthankfulness towards God uttering itself in their addiction of themselves to studies, speculations, and inquiries of a self-concernment, with the neglect of Him, their foolish heart was darkened. Concerning heretics, it is a common notion amongst us that these, from time to time, were turned aside from the way of truth by some unclean spirit or other, as of pride, ambition, envy, voluptuousness, or the like. If these spirits once enter into a man, they will soon call in and take unto themselves other spirits worse than themselves, I mean, spirits of error and delusion, to advocate for them and plead their cause. As for the mistakes and miscarriages in judgment of good men, upright in the main with God and the gospel, about some particular points, they are to be resolved into several causes, of which we shall not now speak particularly: only this I shall say, whatsoever any man's error or mistake in judgment is about the things of the gospel, it is not to be imputed to any deficiency on God's part in the vouchsafement of means unto him, competent and sufficient, as well for the guiding into as for the keeping of his judgment in the way of truth 5 but into some deficiency, neglect, or incogitancy of his own, which he might very possibly have prevented or overcome. But,

**Secondly**, Concerning the Spirit of God, by which alone, and in opposition unto reason, many affirm and teach that the things of God and matters of religion are to be apprehended, discerned, and known, I answer, that such an opinion as this is a conceit as uncouth, as palpably weak, and incoherent with itself, as lightly can be; for if only the Spirit of God within me apprehends the things of God, and I myself apprehend them not, (and apprehend them I cannot but by my reason or understanding, having no other faculty wherewith to apprehend or conceive,) such an apprehension of them relateth not at all unto me: nor can I any whit more be said to apprehend them because the Spirit of God apprehends them in me, than I may or might in case the same Spirit should apprehend them in another man. That which another man meditates or indites in my house without imparting it unto me, no whit more concerns me than in case he should have meditated or indited the

same things in the house of another man. Besides, the Spirit of God being but one and the same infinite indivisible Spirit in all men, he cannot, with any tolerable propriety of speech, nor with truth, be said to apprehend, discern, or conceive that in one man which he doth not after the same manner apprehend, discern, and conceive in another, yea, in every man. Therefore, if there be any thing more apprehended or discerned of the things of God in one man than in another, the difference ariseth not from the different apprehensions of the Spirit in these men, but from the different apprehensions of these men themselves, and this by their own reasons and understandings, they having, as hath been said, no other faculties, principles, or abilities wherewith to apprehend but these.

If it be demanded, But is any man able, without the presence and assistance of the Spirit of God, to discern the things of God, or to judge aright in matters of religion ? I answer,

1. Plainly and directly to the heart, I suppose, of those who make this demand, No. The Spirit of God hath such a great interest in, and glorious superintendency over, the minds, and spirits, reasons, and understandings of men, that they cannot act or move regularly, or perform any of those operations or functions that are most natural and proper to them upon any worthy or comely terms, especially in matters of a spiritual concernment, but by the gracious and loving interposure and help of this Spirit. For, questionless, the intellectual frame of the heart and soul of man, was, by the sin and fall of Adam, wholly dissolved, shattered, brought to an absolute chaos and confusion of ignorance and darkness, to a condition of as great an impotency to do him the least service in order to his comfort or peace in any kind, as can be imagined. So that if the reasons and understandings of men quit themselves in their actings or workings with honour, or in any due proportion to their benefit, comfort, or peace, it must needs be by means of that gracious conjunction of the Spirit of God with them, which is a vouchsafement unto the children of men, procured by him who raised up the tabernacle of Adam when it was fallen, Jesus Christ blessed forever; in respect of which vouchsafement purchased by him, and given unto men for his sake, he is said to enlighten every man coming into the world, John 1:9. So that what light soever of truth, what clear and sound principle or impression of reason, or understanding soever, is, since the fall, to be found in any man, is an express fruit of the grace that is given unto the world upon the



account of Jesus Christ, and is re-invested in the soul by the appropriate interposure of the Spirit of God, the gift whereof, upon this account, is so frequently and highly magnified in the Scriptures. Yea, not only the habitual residency of all principles of light and truth in the soul is to be attributed unto the Spirit of God as supporting and preserving them from defacement, but also all the actings and movings of the rational powers of the soul according to the true exigency, ducture, and import of them, as in all right apprehensions of things, in all legitimate and sound reasonings and debates, whether for the confirmation of any truth or the confutation of any error, or the like. But,

2. Though the Spirit of God contributes by his assistance after that high manner which hath been declared, towards the right apprehending, understanding, discerning the things of God by men, yet this no ways proveth, but that they are the reasons and understandings of men themselves, that must apprehend, discern, and understand these things: and consequently must be provoked, raised, engaged, employed, and improved by men, that they may thus apprehend, and discern, notwithstanding all that assistance which is administered by the Spirit, otherwise nothing will be apprehended or discerned by them. Nor will the assistance of the Spirit we speak of, turn to any account of benefit or comfort, but of loss and condemnation unto men, in case their reasons and understandings shall not advance, and quit themselves according to their interest thereupon.

3. In case the Spirit of God shall at any time reveal (I mean, offer and propose) any of the things of God, or any spiritual truth, unto men, these must be apprehended, discerned, judged of, yea, and concluded to be the things of God, by the reasons and understandings of men, before they can, or ought to receive or believe them to be the things of God, yea, before such a revelation can any ways accommodate, benefit, and bless their soul. When our Saviour, speaking of the Spirit to his disciples, saith, "And he will show you things to come and again, "He shall receive of mine, and shall show them unto you," John 16:13, 14, he supposeth that they (viz. with their own reasons and understandings) were to apprehend and judge of the things that should be thus shown unto them, to have been shown unto them by the Spirit of God, and not to have proceeded from any other author. Yea, in case men shall receive the things of God themselves *for* the things of God, or of the Spirit of God, before their

reason and understanding have upon rational grounds and principles judged them to be the things of God, yet can they not receive them upon these terms, *as the things of God*; I mean, as the things of God ought in duty, and by command from himself, to be received by men, or so as to benefit or enrich the soul by their being received. For as God requires of men to be “praised with understanding,” Psalm 47:7, (*i. e.* out of a rational apprehension, and due consideration of his infinite worth and excellency,) so doth he require to be believed also. And they that believe him otherwise, believe they know not what, nor whom; and so are brethren in vanity with those that “worship they know not what,” John 4:22, and build “altars to an unknown God,” Acts 17:23. To trust, or believe in God upon such terms as these, is, being interpreted, but as the devotion of a man to an idol; yea, the apostle himself arraigns the Athenians of that high crime and misdemeanour of idolatry, upon the account of their sacrificing to “an unknown God,” Acts 17:29.

4. and lastly, The interposure and actings of reason and understanding in men, are of that sovereign and most transcendant use, yea, necessity, in and about matters of religion, that all the agency of the Spirit notwithstanding, a man can perform nothing, no manner of service unto God with acceptation, nothing in a way of true edification to himself, without their engagement and service. First,

I stand charged by God, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God, 1 John 4:1. I demand, by what rule or touchstone shall I try any spirit? When, or upon what account, shall I reject one as a spirit of error, falsehood, and delusion, and do homage with my judgment and conscience to another as the Spirit of God? If it be said, I ought to try the spirits by the Scriptures, or word of God; I demand, again, but how shall I try my touchstone, to be sure that that principle, notion, or ground, which I call the word of God, and by which I go about to try the spirits, is indeed the word of God? There is scarcely any spirit of error that is abroad in the Christian world, but freely offers itself to be tried by the word of God, as well as the true Spirit of God himself, *i. e.* by such meanings, senses, or conclusions, as itself confidently asserts to be the word of God, *i. e.* the mind of God in the Scriptures. So that I am in no capacity to try such a spirit, which upon such an account as this pretends his coming forth from God, unless I be able to prove that those senses, meanings, and conclusions, by which he offers to be tried, are not indeed

the word of God. Now it is impossible that I should prove this merely and only by the Scriptures themselves, because unto what place, or places soever, I shall have recourse for my proof or trial in this case, this spirit will reject my sense and interpretation, in case it maketh against him, and will substitute another that shall not oppose him. Nor can I reasonably or regularly reject his sense in this case, at least as an untruth, unless I apprehend some relish or taste therein which is irrational, or some notion which jarreth with or grateth upon some clear principle or other of reason within me. For as on the one hand, what doctrine or notion soever clearly accordeth, and is commensurable, with any solid and undoubted principle or ground of reason within me, is hereby demonstrably evinced to be a truth, and from God: so, on the other hand, what doctrine or saying soever bears hard, or falls foul, upon any such principle, must of necessity be an error, and somewhat that proceeds from Satan, or from men, and not from God. The reason hereof is clearly asserted by the apostle in these words, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," 1Cor. 14:33. From whence it appears that God is not divided in himself, or contradictory to himself, so as to write or assert that in one book, as in that of the Scriptures, which he denieth or opposeth in another, as viz. in that of nature, or of the fleshly tables of the heart of man; but whatsoever he writeth or speaketh in the one, he writeth or speaketh nothing in the other but what is fairly and fully consistent with it. Upon this account it is a grave and worthy advertisement of Mr. Perkins, in his epistle before his treatise of predestination: "It is," saith he, "also requisite that this doctrine (he speaks of predestination, election, and reprobation) agree with the grounds of common reason, and of that knowledge of God which may be obtained by the light of nature." In this saying of his he clearly supposeth, that whatsoever should be taught by any man in the mysterious and high point of predestination, otherwise than according to the Scriptures and the truth, may be clearly disproved by this, viz. the disagreement of it with the grounds of common reason, and of that knowledge of God which the light of nature shineth into the hearts of men. If himself had kept close to this principle of his own, in drawing up his judgment in the point of predestination, the world had received a far differing and better account from his pen of this subject than now it hath. But if his sense were, that the heights and depths of religion (for so we may well call the doctrines of election and

reprobation, &c.) have nothing in them hut what agreeth with the grounds and principles of common reason, and with the dictates of nature in men, and consequently may be measured, discerned, and judged of by these, he did not conceive that matters of a more facile and ordinary consideration were above the capacity and apprehension of reason. It was the saying of Augustin, that “God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings.” Tertullian hath much upon this account to excellent purpose. In one place, speaking of the soul being yet simple, rude, and unfurnished with any acquired knowledge, either from the Scripture or other institution, he demands why it should be strange, that being given by God it should speak out or sing the same things, the knowledge whereof God giveth unto his children. Not long after he admonisheth the Gentiles, that neither God nor nature lies; and thereupon, that they may believe both God and nature, willeth them to believe their own souls. A little after he saith, that the soul he speaks of hath the words (and therefore the inward senses and impressions) of Christians, whom notwithstanding it wisheth that it might never hear or see. Elsewhere, having mentioned some expressions of affinity with the Scriptures as oft coming out of the mouths of heathens, he triumphs, as it were, over them with this acclamation, “O, the testimony of a soul naturally Christian !” Nor doth Calvin himself say any whit less than all this, when he saith, that “God hath implanted,” (or inwardly put) “the seed of religion in the mind, of men.” Doubtless the seed sympathizeth richly with that body which springs and grows from it. But these things by the way. All impressions, all principles of light and truth, which axe found written in the hearts and consciences of men, are here written by the finger of God himself. Therefore what spirit or doctrine soever symbolizeth in notion and import, with these or any of them, must of necessity be of the same parentage and descent with them, there being no original parent or father of light and truth, but God only. And on the contrary, what doctrine or spirit soever putteth any of these principles to sorrow or shame, and doth not lovingly comport with them, hereby declare themselves to be of a spurious and ignoble race, as Christ reasoned with the Jews, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God,” John 8:42. But because they hated him, he concluded them to be the children of the devil.

Concerning the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of God, or the

Son of God, the conception of a virgin, with some other points of like consideration, commonly pretended to be against, or at least above, and out of the reach and apprehension of reason, I clearly answer: 1. That they are every whit as much, yea, upon the same terms, out of the reach of faith, as of reason. For how can I believe, at least upon good grounds, and as it becometh a Christian to believe, whatsoever he believeth, that which I have no reason, nor am capable of apprehending any reason, nay, for which there is no reason, why I should believe it? If it be said I am bound to believe the doctrines specified, because they are revealed by God; I answer, that this is a rational ground, whereof my reason and understanding are thoroughly capable, why I should believe them. The light of nature clearly informeth me, that what God revealeth or speaketh must needs be true, and consequently worthy and meet to be believed. If it be further said, but reason is not able to apprehend or conceive how three should be really and essentially one, and the same: how a virgin should conceive, and bring forth a son, &c., I answer that no faith or belief in such things as these is required of me, nor would be accepted with God in case it were in me, above what I am able by my reason to apprehend and understand. As I am not able to apprehend by my reason the particular and distinct manner how the three persons subsist in one and the same Divine nature and essence, so neither am I bound to believe it. That which I am bound to believe in this point is only this, that there are three who do thus subsist, I mean in the same Divine essence, and for this my reason is apprehensive enough why I should believe it, viz., because God himself hath revealed it, as hath been said. If I should confidently believe anything more or further concerning the trinity of persons, commonly so called, and there is the same reason of the other points mentioned, than what I know upon the clear account of my reason and understanding, it would be presumption in me, and not faith; and I should contract the guilt of those whom the apostle chargeth with intruding or advancing themselves into the things, which they have not seen, *i. e.* rationally apprehended and understood. But,

2. If it be yet demanded, but is it not contrary to the grounds of nature, and so to principles of reason, that a virgin should conceive a child? And if so, how can such a doctrine, according to what you have asserted, be received as from God, or as a truth? I answer, it is no ways contrary to reason, nor to any principle thereof, that God should be able to make a

virgin to conceive, but very consonant hereunto ; as the apostle Paul supposed it credible enough, as we lately heard, even in the eye of reason, that God should make the earth bring forth her dead alive, Acts 26:8. Indeed that a virgin should conceive in a natural way, or according to the course of ordinary Providence, is contrary unto reason; but this religion requireth not of any man to believe. Nor doth it bear hard at all upon any principle of reason, that God should be willing to do every whit as great and strange a thing as that (I mean as to cause a virgin to conceive) for the accomplishment of so great and glorious a design, as the saving of a lost world. Nor is it contrary to reason, or any principle thereof, that God, or the first Being, being infinite, should have a manner of subsisting or being far different from the manner of subsistence which is appropriate to all created and finite beings ; or that this manner of subsisting, which is proper unto him, should be unto men incomprehensible. But most consonant it is to principles of reason, when God himself hath pleased so far to reveal that appropriate and incomprehensible manner of his subsisting, as to declare and say, that he subsisteth in three, that men should accordingly believe it so to be. So that most certain it is that there is nothing in Christian religion, so far as it concerneth men to know and believe, but what fairly and friendly comports with that reason and understanding which God hath given unto man, and what by a diligent and conscientious use of these noble faculties, he may come to know and believe, at least so far as to salve his great interest of salvation.

Look with how many precepts, exhortations, admonitions, I stand charged by God to submit unto, and practise; I am under so many charges and engagements from him likewise to exercise my reason and understanding, 1. To apprehend aright the mind of God in every of these respectively, lest when he enjoineth me one thing, I, through mistake, should do another: 2. To consider how, when, and in what cases I am commanded by him to do this or that: 3, and lastly, to pass by other particulars, To gather together and call up upon my soul all such motives and considerations which I am able, whereby to provoke, stir up, and strengthen myself to the execution and performance of all things accordingly. When God commandeth me to strive to enter in at the strait gate, to seek his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof in the first place, to labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, to be a man in understanding, (to omit other precepts of like nature, without number,)

he commandeth me consquentially, and with a direct, clear, and necessary implication, to rise up in the might of my reason and understanding in order to the performance of these things: nor am I capable of performing the least of these great and most important commands, in any due manner, but by interesting my reason, judgment, understanding, and this thoroughly and effectually, in and about the performance. The truth is, I stand bound in duty and conscience towards God, and in faithfulness to mine own soul, neither to believe anything at all, as coming from God, which I have not, or may have, a very substantial ground in reason to believe cometh indeed from him: nor yet to do anything at all, as commanded by him, unless there be a like ground in reason to persuade me that it is indeed his command.

I confess, good reader, I have presumed at somewhat an unreasonable rate upon thy patience, in detaining thee so long with the argument yet in hand. But the sense of that unconceivable mischief and misery, which I most certainly know have been brought upon the Christian world, at least in our quarters of it, and which lie sore upon it at this day, by means of the reigning of this notion or doctrine amongst us, that men ought not to use, but lay aside their reason in matters of religion, lieth so intolerably sad and heavy upon my spirit, that I could not relieve myself to any competent degree, with saying less than what hath been said, to relieve the world, by hewing in sunder such a snare of death cast upon it. Most assuredly, all the ataxies, disorders, confusions, seditions, insurrections, all the errors, blasphemous opinions, apostasies from the truth and ways of holiness, all trouble of mind, and sad workings of conscience in me, all unrighteousness and injustice, all bribery and oppression, all unmanlike self-seeking and prevaricating with public interests and trusts, all covetousness and deceit, and whatsoever can be named in this world, obstructive, destructive, to the present comfort and peace, to the future blessedness and glory, of the sons and daughters of men, proceed and spring from this one root of bitterness and of death; they neglect to advance and engage home their reasons, judgments, understandings, in matters of religion, to employ and improve them according to their proper interests and capacities in these most important affairs.

O reader, my mouth is open unto thee, my heart is enlarged. Now for a recompense in the same, I speak unto thee as a dear brother in Christ, he thou also enlarged. Say unto the world round about thee, "Awake thou

that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Doubtless the world would soon find itself in another manner of posture than now it is, and see the whole hemisphere of it filled with the glorious light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, if the inhabitants thereof, every man from his quarters, would be persuaded to rise up in the might of those abilities, those heavenly endowments of reason, judgment, understanding, wherewith God, by Jesus Christ, hath re-invested them, to seek after him, by inquiring diligently into, by weighing narrowly all those things as works of creation, works of providence, inscriptions upon the soul, and especially the sacred word of extraordinary revelation, wherein and whereby God hath drawn near unto men, and, as it were, prepared, postured, and fitted himself on purpose to be found and known, and this as well in the excellency of his grace, as of his glory, by all those who upon these terms seek after him. The time was, when the Spirit was not given, because Christ was not glorified in heaven, John 7:39; the time now is wherein the Spirit is not given unto the world according to the preparations of the royal bounty and magnificence of heaven, because he is not glorified on earth by the worthy employment of the means, abilities, opportunities vouchsafed unto men. The word of God makes it one argument of the wickedness and sensual ways of men, that they have not the Spirit, Jude 18, 19: yea, the apostle Paul by charging the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, Eph. 5:18, clearly supposeth it to be a sinful strain of a voluntary unworthiness in men, if they have not a very rich and plentiful anointing of the Spirit. He that lives up to those principles of light which God hath vested in him, is under the beatifical influence of that most rich promise of Christ, “to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly,” Matt. 25:29. By him that hath, in this promise, is meant, as clearly appears from the tenor of the parable immediately preceding, such a person who useth, employeth, improveth that which he hath, hereby declaring that he hath what he hath. Nor is that which he is here said to have, anything of a spiritual or supernatural import. This likewise is evident from the said parable. For here one of the three, who all had received talents, one or more, all which talents must needs, by the course of the parable, be supposed to be of one and the same kind, nor is there the least intimation of any difference, especially of any specifical difference, between them, is said to be an evil and slothful servant, notwithstanding his talent; and



because of his slothfulness, to have been cast into utter darkness. These are no characters, especially in the judgment of those with whom we are to conflict in the ensuing discourse, of persons that had received any thing saving or supernatural. But by that which is here promised to be given, and that in abundance, to him that hath, must of necessity be meant somewhat that is of a spiritual and saving nature. This also is evident, from the carriage of the same parable, where the servants, who had received the talents, and employed them faithfully, by whom are typified our Saviour's, [GREEK WORDS], those that have, as was lately said, are graciously invited by their master into his joy: "Enter thou into thy master's joy so to the other; "Enter thou into thy master's joy." Now if either God, or Christ, be signified and meant by the master of those servants, as I suppose no man questions but that either the one or the other are typified hereby, by entering into their joy, cannot be meant a receiving of a greater measure of natural gifts or endowments, nor of receiving any reward which belongs to persons qualified only with such endowments as these, but salvation, or eternal blessedness and glory. If so, it roundly follows, that by what Christ promiseth shall be given to him that hath, in the sense declared, is meant somewhat of a saving consequence, as regenerating grace, the sanctifying Spirit of God, faith, and the like. And promising, not only, or simply, that to him that hath shall be given, but further, that he shall have abundantly, he clearly signifieth, that in case men will provoke, stir up, and lay out themselves accordingly in the improvements of such abilities and gifts, which shall from time to time be vouchsafed unto them, they may, by virtue of the bounty and gracious decree of God in that behalf, attain and receive from God what proportion or measure of the Spirit of grace and of God they can desire. Therefore, they that teach men to be merely passive in matters of religion, and forbid them the use of their reasons and understandings, as unlawful or dangerous, in these affairs, how prudently soever they may consult their own carnal ease, honour, or worldly accommodations by such a doctrine, yet herein they say unto man, in effect, Be not excellent: let it never be said that the God of heaven hath made you rich or great.

Good reader, I have no apology for my prolixity in the argument in hand, but only the high and sovereign importance of it, together with mine own abounding in the sense of that most sad calamity, under which the world groaneth by means of the importune and tyrannical regency of

that notion or doctrine unto the deposal whereof I have lift up my heart and hand in all that I have said herein. I shall only add this one word more, upon this account, at the present: whereas thou, I fear, art ready to complain of a long harvest already, the truth is, that all I have said in the business hitherto, is but a first-fruit of that abundance, which yet remaineth in my spirit and soul, ready to utter itself upon any other like occasion, for the eradication and utter extirpation, if it be possible, of that most pestilential and pernicious notion and conceit out of the minds of men. In the meantime I shall make thee some part of amends for thy patient bearing of my burden in this point, by as much brevity as thou canst reasonably desire in the third and last particular yet remaining. The tenor hereof was, to remove some stumbling stones, which it is like have been thrown in thy way, to alienate thy mind from the perusal of the discourse ensuing.

For Satan and men have together devised and hammered out a variety of arguments, or pretences, to alienate the minds of weak and inconsiderate persons, not only from the doctrines themselves here asserted, but even from acquainting themselves with hooks or discourses, of like argument and plea with the discourse before thee.

One vizor very hideous and affrighting, which they put upon the face of such discourses as this, to scare children in understanding from them, is, that they teach the uncomfortable, sad, and dismal doctrine of the possibility of saints and true believers falling away, and this both totally and finally. But how far this doctrine is from being either uncomfortable, sad, or dismal, I shall not here stand to demonstrate; but refer thee to the ninth chapter of the discourse itself, with several other passages afterwards, where I evidently prove, the two opposite doctrines being duly and impartially compared together, that that which denieth this possibility, is every whit as great, yea, a far greater enemy to the peace and comfort of the saints, than that which affirmeth it.

2. Some labour to work a distaste of such discourses as we speak of in the minds of men, by possessing them with a conceit, that they are derogatory and injurious to the grace, or freeness of the grace of God, in the salvation of men; and that they exalt nature, and the abilities hereof, as free will and the like, to the dishonour and prejudice of this grace. To this I answer, 1. That I am no ways responsible for all that may possibly be taught or said, in every treatise or discourse, that buildeth up one or

more of the doctrines here asserted, but only for such things wherein their sense and mine greet each other. 2. I answer to the charge, in reference to myself, and my doctrine and judgment touching the grace of God, that it is of a like consideration and relation between my accusers and me, as the accusation of an unchaste deportment brought against Joseph by his mistress, was between them. For as the accuser here, and not the accused, was guilty of the crime objected in the accusation, so the truth is, that the sense and opinion of those who sentence my doctrine as injurious to the grace, or freeness of the grace of God, are themselves deep in the condemnation, my doctrine being as innocent as the manifest truth itself is from such a crime: nor doth it exalt nature any whit more, if not much less, than they. For, concerning the grace of God, and the freeness hereof, I hold and teach nothing but what fairly and frilly accords "with these positions. 1. That the original, or first spring of the salvation of the world, and so of every particular person, that comes to be saved, was in and from the grace, the free grace, and good pleasure of God. 2. That the whole method, or system of counsels by which, and according unto which, God effecteth and bringeth to pass the salvation of all that are saved, did proceed wholly and entirely from the same grace and good pleasure. 3. And more particularly, that the gift of Jesus Christ for a mediator and saviour unto the world; and so, the grant or promise of justification and salvation unto men, by or upon believing, issued solely and wholly from the same grace. 4. That men by nature, and of themselves, *i. e.* considered in and under such a condition as they were brought unto by Adam, and wherein they should have subsisted, in case they had ever been born and lived in the world, had not the free grace of God in Christ interposed to relieve them, and better their condition, have no strength or power, not the least inclination or propension of will, to do anything, little or much, acceptable unto God, or of a saving import. 5. That notwithstanding this restoration or healing of the natural condition of man by the free grace of God, yet there is not one of a thousand, possibly not one throughout the whole world, but so far corrupts himself with the lusts of the flesh, and ways of the world, that without a second relief from the free grace of God, as, *viz.* in his patience and longsuffering towards him, ever comes to repent or believe, or to persevere believing, and so to be saved. 6. That it is from the free and undeserved grace of God, that any person of mankind is so much as put into a capacity of

believing, or hath power and means vouchsafed unto him, sufficient to enable him to believe. 7. That a man is put into this capacity of believing by an irresistible acting or working of the free grace of God. 8. That when any man, by virtue of the power and means vouchsafed unto him by the free grace of God, comes actually to believe, the exercise and acting of this power proceeds also from the free grace and good pleasure of God: so that no man ever believeth, without a present and actual assistance from the free grace of God in order to this his believing, over and above his ability or power to believe.

9. And lastly, that the act of believing, whensoever it is performed by any man, is so inconsiderably, and at so low a rate of efficiency from a man's self, that, to help apprehension a little in the case, suppose the act of believing could be divided into a thousand parts, or degrees, nine hundred and ninety-nine of them are to be ascribed unto the free grace of God, and only the one remaining unto man. Yea, this one degree of the action is no otherwise neither to be ascribed unto man, than as graciously supported, strengthened, and assisted by the free grace of God. The reader will find none of these positions contradicted by anything affirmed or denied in the discourse. I attribute as much as possibly can be attributed to the free grace of God, in and about the act of believing, saving the attributableness of the action unto man himself, in the lowest and most diminutive sense that can well be conceived. For certain it is, that it is the creature man, not God, or the Spirit of God, that believeth: and therefore of necessity there must so much, or such a degree of efficiency about it be left unto man, which may with truth give it the denomination of being his. And they that go about to interest the free grace of God, in or about the act of believing, upon any other terms, or so that the act itself cannot truly be called the act of the creature, or of man, are injurious in the highest manner to the grace of God at this main turn, rendering it altogether unprofitable to the poor creature, who, by the verdict of such a notion, should be left in his sins, and never come to be justified. For the law of justification is expressly this: "He that believeth shall be justified." Therefore, if it be not man himself who believeth, it is impossible that he should be justified. He that shall ingenuously and impartially compare the doctrine of our adversaries touching the grace of God, with that the substance whereof hath been expressed in the nine positions lately exhibited, will clearly find, that this grace is by many

degrees more highly, and with another manner of an heavenly magnificence, advanced by the tenor and import of this doctrine, than of the other; yea, and that nature is far more depressed and abased, in the latter than, in the former. But,

3. Some pretend that the doctrines and opinions maintained in such discourses as this, are only old rotten errors, rejected and thrown out of the church by orthodox men in all ages: But they who hedge up the way of men with such thorns as these, to keep them from reading such books as we speak of, cannot but scratch, yea, rend and tear, their consciences with them. Concerning the two doctrines more largely handled in the following discourse, I prove, upon a most pregnant account, in the fifteenth chapter for the one, and in the nineteenth for the other, besides many other places in the body of the discourse, that they were never rejected or cast out of the church by any council or synod reputed orthodox, at least until the late Synod of Dort, but were constantly taught by all orthodox antiquity, are at this day more generally taught by the Lutheran party of the reformed churches, yea, and have many full and clear testimonies of their truth from the pen of Calvin, himself, and many others that are counted pillars on his side.

4. Some are brought out of love with such discourses as this, by being informed that they are full of nice, subtle, and curious speculations, and that the secrets of God are too narrowly and presumptuously pried into by the authors of them. To this I answer, 1. If any man, whether in the handling of the doctrines we now speak of, or of any other, advanceth himself into the things which he hath not seen, or above the proportion of his faith, let him suffer as a transgressor of the law of sobriety: I shall not be his advocate. For the discussions managed in the treatise ensuing, I go no further than I feel the ground firm under me; or if at any time I come to a place that is soft and tender, I tread light, and charge no great matter of weight upon it. Yet, 2. Not to go up to the mount when God calleth and offereth the kisses of his mouth unto us there, under a pretence of danger in climbing, is to reject the bounty of heaven, and to betray' our richest opportunities for the making of ourselves excellent and great in the sight of God, and angels, and men. 3. Things revealed in the Scriptures, as well those of the most spiritual and sublime consideration, which our Saviour calls "heavenly," John 3:12, and the apostle Paul sometimes "the deep things of God," 1 Cor. 2:10, sometimes "strong meat," Heb. 5:14, as well

as things of a more obvious and facile import, belong unto us and our children; *i. e.*, are our spiritual patrimony, which God our Father hath given us to maintain ourselves honourably, as *viz.*, in faith and holiness in the world. Every inch of such an inheritance is worth the standing upon and contending for. 4. Aristotle, in his moral discourses, somewhere observes, that persons who are vicious or tardy in either of the extremes frequently censure him that is truly virtuous and steers a middle course between them, as if he were an offender in that extreme which is opposite to the other extreme, wherein themselves are delinquent. So it is to be feared that many who complain of curiosity in speculation, and of prying into the secrets of God, are themselves dull of hearing, of remiss and unengaged spirits in the things of God, and therefore call the most substantial and solid discourses, if they be of any considerable elevation and worthy of those who are spiritual and men of understanding, by the unworthy name of nice and curious speculations.

5. And lastly for this, I confess that the doctrine of election and reprobation, and so of the extent of the efficacy of the death of Christ and of the interest of the Spirit of God in the work of conversion, might have been managed and carried with far less appearance of curiosity, had not the controverters of the one side forsaken the solid grounds and principles of reason in their expositions of the Scriptures, and obtruded upon the world such notions and conceits under a pretence of scripture authority, because of an appearance of some words and phrases comporting with them, the vanity and unsoundness whereof could not be sufficiently detected but by the light of some such strains of reason which the minds and thoughts of men being not accustomed unto may at first very probably censure as more curious than safe, more subtle than sound. But the saying of Basil is worthy consideration on this point: "Truth," saith he, "is hard to be taken by hunting, and must be found out by a narrow observing of her footsteps on every side and more especially the discovery of the truth in the controversies we speak of, mainly depending upon the knowledge of the nature of God and of the manner of his actings, which are matters of a very spiritual and abstruse contemplation, it cannot reasonably be expected but that the disputes themselves should sometimes soar high, so that the ordinary apprehensions of men may possibly lose the sight of them for a time.

5. Some plead a non-necessity of bestowing our time in looking into

books that shall now or hereafter be written about the argument or subject-matter of the present discourse, upon a pretence that nothing more can be said therein than hath been said already, and that all scriptures and arguments that can be levied for the defence of the doctrines maintained herein have been already answered. Such a pretence as this is proper for men who hope to make a great purchase with a little money, to produce the honour and reputation of much knowledge and learning by uttering a few assuming and daring words: for, upon what sober and rational account can such a saying proceed from any man? or who can say unto the Almighty, with due reverence to the unsearchable riches either of his wisdom or of his grace and bounty, Hitherto indeed thou hast advanced thyself in giving wisdom and understanding unto men, but further thou canst not go, thy treasures are exhausted? It becometh not me to say, unless I were invested with Paul's privilege of speaking without offence like a fool, 2 Cor. 11:16, 23, that there are several considerations and grounds traversed in the present discourse, and these intimously relating to the controversies there handled, which I believe the masters of the pretence last specified have not observed in all their travels through those many regions of books and authors which they would be supposed to have read and studied for the information of themselves and others with the truth in those great controversies. And whereas the pretext in hand glorieth that all that hath been said in defence of the opinions avouched in our discourse hath been already answered, unless he take sanctuary at some very improper signification, of the word *answer*, his glorying in this behalf will be found to his shame.; yea, such a sanctuary as this will not much relieve him. Indeed, as Tacitus saith of the ancient Britons of this nation in relation to the Romans, "Eos potius triumphatos, quam victos fuisse," that the Romans rather triumphed over them than overcame them; so have the adversaries of the opinions and doctrines we speak of been at the charge of erecting many trophies, one after another, as if they had by the sword of the Spirit and dint of argument vanquished' and subdued them, and trodden down their strength; whereas, upon a true and impartial account, the main grounds and pillars upon which the said doctrines stand will be found to remain undemolished and unshaken to this day, yea, and to have too much evidence and clearness of truth in them ever to be shaken.

Some pretend that the opinions contended for in this discourse have

been from time to time taken up and held, for the most part, by a looser and less religious generation of men, and the contrary by persons of a better name for holiness and worthiness of conversation. This notion is accessory to some men's stumblings at the said opinions, yea, and at all those, whether men or books, that give the right hand of fellowship unto them. But what near communion this notion hath with darkness and untruth is abundantly proved in the ninth, fifteenth, and nineteenth chapters of the discourse, besides other places. Although the truth is, that, were there truth in it, yet would there be little weight in it to mediate a resolved enmity between men's judgments and these opinions. The devil held that Jesus Christ was the Holy One of God, Mark 1:24, and professed it, while Paul persecuted him and thought verily that he was bound to do many things against his name, Acts 26:9. But to this point I speak more in the said fifteenth, chapter.

The noise of Arminianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism, is very terrible in the ears of some, and make the said opinions the dread and abhorring of their souls, and all books and men that own them as the shadow of death unto them. To this I answer, 1, That it is a saying of Luther, that "God sometimes puts on the vizard of the devil, and the devil the vizard of God; but God would be known" by men "under the vizard of the devil, and would have the devil rejected under the vizard of God." Odious names and imputations are but the devil's vizors, which, though they be by men put upon the face of truth, will not excuse us in our rejections of the truth. But, 2. Concerning the charge of Pelagianism, I demonstrate, in several passages in the discourse, that the opinions there pleaded have an express diametrical antipathy against the errors of Pelagius, and that the sense of our adversaries, in opposition to us, is truly Pelagian. 3. Concerning Arminianism, I confess I do not well understand what men mean by it. I suppose they mean the owning of such doctrines or opinions in opposition to the truth, so voted and called by men, which were held and taught by Arminius. If so, the formality or essence of Arminianism doth not stand in holding anything simply in opposition to the truth, but in opposition unto men, as supposed by themselves and others to be truth. The Jewish doctors, who love to be called Rabbi, have a saying, that the law is on earth, not in heaven; the import of which saying Musculus interprets to be this, that the law (meaning of God) is subject to their power or authority. If this be the sense of those that are teachers amongst



us, that their authority is competent to overrule the Scriptures, or to make truth and error of what they please, they who dissent from them must, for ought I know, compose themselves as well as they can to bear the burthen of their imputations. If the opinions commended by me for truth in the work in hand be Arminian, certain I am that the ancient fathers and writers of the Christian Church were generally Arminian: yea, and that Calvin himself had many sore fits and pangs of Arminianism, at times, upon him, yea, and that the Synod of Dort itself was not free from the infection; nor scarce any writer of name and note in these latter times. These things are brought into a clear and unquestionable light by the discourse ensuing. Concerning Socinianism; if the opinions themselves charged herewith know no more than I do of the truth of the charge, they may justly take up David's complaint, and say, "They lay to our charge things that we know not," Psal. 35:11. But if such doctrines or tenets, which now suffer the ignominy and reproach of Arminianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, &c., shall be found to be the truths of the ever-living God, sorrow and shame, and confusion of face will be a portion, at least, of the portion of those who have crowned them with the honour of such martyrdom. "The day will declare it, because it shall be revealed as by fire."

Some pretend that all disputes in matters of religion, wherein the received doctrines or tenets generally held in those places where such disputes are commenced, are opposed, tend to the unsettling and disquieting the minds and consciences of men: and minister occasion unto many to abandon all care and thoughts of religion, as containing little in it but matter of uncertainty, and doubtfulness of disputation; and upon this account, very passable, as they suppose, are professed enemies to such disputes. But to this we briefly answer, 1. That it is much better that men's judgments and consciences should be for a time disturbed, than that they should always remain settled upon the lees and dregs of any rotten and unsound opinion. We lately showed how perilous error is to the precious souls of men. God never dealt more graciously by the earth than when he shook the heavens, by sending the Messiah of the world to turn the state of religion, as it were, upside down in the midst of it. David acknowledged unto God that it was good for him that he had been afflicted; that so he might learn his statutes, Psal. 119:71. And so many, I believe, have, and happy were it had more the like cause to say it:

it is good for us that we were sometimes shaken in our judgments and consciences, that we might learn the truth. 2. They who are offended, that there should be arguings and disputes to and fro about the things of God, and matters of religion, seem to be either discontented that the things and counsels of God should be so spiritual, or remote from the common or first apprehensions of men, that all men should not at once understand them; or else loathe, that they who are in the gall of any bitterness, by being entangled with error, should be delivered. We read that Paul frequented the synagogue for the space of three months together, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, Acts 19:8. And afterwards, that for two years together he disputed daily, about matters of the same nature and import, in the house of one Tyrannus, ver. 9, 10. 3, and lastly. Had it not been for disputes in matters of religion, the pillars of antichrist's throne had not been shaken to this day. Upon occasion of those frequent disputes in Germany about matters of religion in Luther's days, a magistrate and judge of the popish party said: "If it comes to matter of dispute our whole mystery will be confounded." And as wisdom saith, "All they that hate me love death," Prov. 8:36; so may sober and thorough examinations and discussions of the mysteries of our faith, say, All they that hate us love darkness, love error, love danger, yea, and death also. As for the allegation of those who pretend all controversies and disputes about matters of religion to be malignant to the civil peace, and therefore judge it a high point of state policy to discharge their coasts of them, as the Gadarenes did of Christ, it is not worthy an answer; inasmuch as it savours more of Atheism and profaneness than of reason or Christian policy. For it is an express order from heaven, directed unto all Christians, to "contend," and that "earnestly, for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," Jude 3. Now to restrain the members or subjects of a state from doing that which God, upon whom the peace, safety, and prosperity of all states so entirely depend, hath so expressly enjoined them to do is, without all peradventure, to consult, not the joy or peace, but the sorrow, trouble, ruin of this state.

Other pretences of a lighter and looser notion it is like there are, by which some are made such affectionate and effeminate proselytes to the opinions rejected in this treatise, that they cannot bear the gentlest or softest air that breathes cool upon them. But I am already beyond the

line of an epistle : and therefore shall not persue the phase of such enemies any further. I crave leave only to add a few words concerning the change of my judgment in the great controversy about the death of Christ, with the rest depending hereon, by way of answer unto those who labour to represent my present judgment in the said points, as little valuable or considerable, because it sometimes stood a contrary way. Though I know nothing in the allegation subservient in the least degree to the end and purpose therein mentioned, but rather much against it; yet let me say, 1. That however sin and an evil conversation are just matter of shame and disparagement unto a man, yet repentance and amendment of life are truly honourable. Nor do I know why it should be of any more disparaging an intepretation against any man to reform his judgment, than bis life, neither of which can be done without a change in either. Nor, 2, can I resent any such conformity with my never-sufficiently admired, adored Saviour, which consists in an increase of wisdom, (for herein he is reported to have increased in the days of his flesh, Luke 2:52,) any matter of prejudice or disparagement either to myself or any other man. Though he indeed was never prevented with error, yet was he post- enriched with the truth in many things. A man can hardly, if possibly, “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord,” 2 Pet. 3:18, without outgrowing himself in judgment and understanding from time to time, without rectifying and making straight many things in his mind and thoughts which were crooked before. 3. That chosen vessel Paul never quitted himself like a man, never consulted peace and glory to himself, until he built up that faith which sometimes he had destroyed. Nor was his authority or esteem in the gospel, and in the things of Jesus Christ, ever a whit the lighter upon the balance because he had sometimes been a Pharisee. 4. I desire to ask the men that make the change of my judgment a spot of weakness or vileness in it, whether themselves were always in the same mind touching all things with themselves at present. If so, it plainly argues that their thoughts and apprehensions, now they are men, are but such, which are incident unto children. And if, since their coming to riper years, they have always stood, and are resolved always to stand, by their first thoughts and apprehensions in all things, it a sign that their judgments reside more in their wills, than their wills in their judgments; and that they are much more like to judge according to appearance than to judge righteous

judgment. But this whole nation knoweth, to its sorrow and sad sufferings, that many of the persons we speak of have shifted their judgments, and that in matters of a far more ready and easy cognizance than the questions about predestination, into a troublesome comer. Yea, there are very few of those amongst them who call themselves ministers of the gospel, hut many times, when they preach, within the compass of an hour, either change their judgments or deny them, their doctrine being frequently Samaritan, when their application is a Jew. 5. If to dig broken cisterns, with the forsaking of the fountain of living water, be the committing of a double evil, Jer. 2:13, how shall not a recouring to the fountain of living waters in conjunction with a forsaking of broken cisterns, be the practising of a double duty ? And if so, shall it not be of so much the higher acceptation with God? And if it be thus, ought it not to be of higher acceptation with men also ? To forsake an error is one duty, and to embrace truth is another: whereas to persist in one and the same mind, suppose it be sound and good, is but a single duty. Our Saviour informeth us, that "there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance," Luke 15:7. That which is an occasion of a multiplied rejoicing in heaven, why should it be made matter of complaint, charge, or imputation upon earth? 6. He is in the most likely and best capacity to give a right judgment between two countries or lands, as which is the more fruitful, the more healthful, the more pleasant of situation, &c., who hath been an inhabitant in both, and acquainted himself with the respective conditions of both in such particulars. In like manner, it is so far from being a reason, why a man's present judgment should be rejected, that he hath been of a contrary judgment formerly, that it rendereth it the more considerable and competent to discern aright between those opinions, with which it hath been thoroughly, and upon a conscientious engagement, acquainted. It is a true saying of the heathen philosopher, "*GREEK WORDS*" *i. e.* Every man is able to judge well of those things which he knoweth. But when a man, having a long time known and professed such an opinion, by and under the profession whereof he enjoyed peace, credit, wealth, love and respect from men of all sorts, and was in a fair and probable way to have lift up his head yet higher in the world, by his continuance in the profession of the same, shall notwithstanding relent in his judgment, and quit the profession of

this opinion, and profess that which is opposite to it, wherein he could not but in all reason judge and conclude beforehand, that he should with Paul, suffer loss of all things, lose credit, lose friends, lose all hopes of preferment from the world; when a man, I say, shall change his judgment upon such terms as these, it is a strong argument that he well and thoroughly understands the spiritual danger and inconvenience of the opinion which he forsakes, as likewise the worth, truth, and goodness of that which he embraceth and professeth in the place of it. Therefore, 7, and lastly, as David replied to Michal, when she upbraided him with such a deportment, by which, as she apprehended, he had made himself contemptible and vile, “I,” saith he, “will yet be more vile than thus,” 2 Sam. 6:22. So, the grace of God assisting me, if the changing of my judgment upon such terms, as God knoweth, and men also know in part I have done in the controversies oft mentioned, rendereth either me or my judgment contemptible, I am resolved, upon the like occasion, to make both it and myself more contemptible yet, by cutting off from my soul error after error, as fast as they shall be discovered unto me, and by changing my judgment as oft as I shall thoroughly understand that my spiritual interest doth require it. Yea, it shall be one of my chief exercises, *quotidie de erroribus meis demere*, to diminish daily the number of my errors, by making a diligent and frequent survey of the state and condition of my judgment, and by separating the vile from the precious here, until no misprision at all of God, or of any of his things shall, if it be possible, be found with me.

Reader, I trust, though I have wearied thee with a long epistle, and so have made thee incapable of reading farther at present, yet I have withal begotten in thee a serious desire and resolution to possess thy heart, soul, judgment, conscience, with the substance of the ensuing discourse, and this with as much expedition as thy opportunities of reading will permit. “Let them that have wives, be as if they had none: and they that weep as though they wept not: and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not: and they that buy, as if they possessed not,” 1 Cor. 7:29, 30: but let him that runneth for the great prize of a blessed eternity, for an incorruptible crown of glory, be as a man wholly taken up, and transported with the glory of his engagement, let him so run as if he had nothing else to do but to run this race. Give me leave to mind thee of an admonition recommended unto men by an heathen philosopher: “It becometh not

him that is a man, to mind the things of men,” (*i.e.* such things as men commonly mind,) “nor him that is mortal, mortal things. But as far as is possible to immortalise it, and so to quit himself in all things, as to live according to that which is most excellent in him,” (meaning his mind and understanding.) Now thy God, and my God, of his rich grace give thee a large heart to understand and consider the great things of thy peace; recompense the labour and travel of thy soul in reading the discourse here presented unto thee, with the precious returns of light and life and peace into thy bosom, that when thou shalt have read thou mayest say, I have been in the mount with God, and mayest return with thine heart rejoicing and with thy face shining unto men. This, good reader, is the unfeigned desire and fervent prayer of, Thy brother in Christ, Greatly devoted to the peace of thy soul,

JOHN GOODWIN.

*From my study in Coleman-street, London, Feb. 12, 1650.*

**REDEMPTION REDEEMED.**

## CHAPTER 1.

**There is no created being, or second cause whatsoever, but dependeth upon the first and supreme Cause or Being, which is God: and this as well in the second as in the first act; I mean as well in the motions and operations issuing from, or performed by, every of them, as in their simple existence or being itself.**

WE shall not need, I presume, to levy a dispute for the gathering or getting in that tribute due to the crown and sovereignty of being, from all beings besides, which consists in an acknowledgment of his free bounty, in calling them out of the abyss of vanity and nothing by the word of his power, hereby taking them into part and fellowship with himself in his prerogative of being, according to what was resolved by “the counsel of his will,” as meet to be dispensed unto every of them, respectively, in this kind. Trees that are thoroughly and deeply rooted in the earth, will grow and flourish, though the dew or rain from heaven should seldom or never fall upon them: but grass, and herbs, and tender plants, whose roots have but a slender and thin protection of their element against the scorching violence of the sun, will soon wither and die away if the clouds of heaven should not ever and anon drop verdure upon them, and relieve them. In like manner, such notions and impressions in the soul, into which nature is deeply baptized and mightily possessed with their truth, are like to live and to maintain their interest and authority in men, though not seconded or relieved by argument or dispute; but those, which have only taken a fainter and looser hold of the judgments and consciences of men, are in danger of miscarrying, and proving like “the com upon the house top, which,” as David observeth, “withereth before it be grown up,” Psal. 129:6, unless they be timely, yea and frequently encouraged, backed, and strengthened by discourse. That there is a Being, which looks upon this universe, with all the host of it, as the workmanship of his own hands; and that every creature, or finite being, is lineally descended from him as their great and first progenitor, are, I conceive, such principles of light and truth, written in so fair and full a character in the tables of all men’s hearts, that even whilst they run they may read them, yea, and cannot lightly depose or suffer the loss of them, though they be not bound upon



their judgments and consciences with any other bands of argument or demonstration, than those of their own evidence and conviction. Therefore what God hath made manifest and clear in men, we shall not cast any suspicion of darkness or obscurity upon by making it matter of disputation.

And though the dependence of things in actual and complete being upon God for sustentation and support, as well of their simple existences and beings themselves, as of their operations (respectively, which is the sense and substance of the thesis propounded.) be not altogether of so pregnant an inspiration as dependence upon him for their production, and first bringing into being; yet conceiving it not to be of any difficult or remote speculation, nor finding it so much as controverted or questioned by any considering man, especially of latter times, we shall in these respects content ourselves with a brief and light inquiry upon it.

The Holy Ghost indeed judged the assertion of this truth, and that by one of his greatest instruments, worthy of him; yet not so much, I suppose, to commend it simply as a truth, or to secure the judgments and consciences of men of the veracity of it, as to enforce the practical consequences thereof upon them; upon which ground, doubtless, it is that We find so many common and ordinary truths, not only delivered, but some of them oft repeated and inculcated in the Scriptures. Principles and assertions that are very obvious and low for matter of truth and apprehension, may be transcendently weighty and high in those things, whether relating unto practice or opinion, which are enfolded and contained in them, and deducible from them. Mary was but a carpenter's wife, yet did she bring forth the Great Messiah and Saviour of the world. But this only occasionally. The truth held forth in the thesis is the clear doctrine of the apostle Paul, and that preached at Athens, amongst philosophers, for learning and knowledge, the princes of the world. "For in him," saith he, speaking of God, "we live, and move, and are, or subsist," (as the original GREEK, importeth,) GREEK, "in him," *i. e.* through him, or by means of him, (as the preposition *tv*) frequently signifieth, Acts 17:28. We are not said to live, move, and have our beings in God in a way of permission only, as, viz., because he refrains the exercise of that power in him, by which he is as able to take away all our beings as he was at first to give them; or because he forbears to annihilate us: in such a sense as this, we might as well be said to live in every man,

who having power and opportunity to kill us, yet suffereth us in the possession of our lives. But we are said to receive or have these accommodations in or through God in a positive way, viz., by means of a glorious supporting influence, which issuing from, his power by the mediation of his goodness or will, is to the great body of the creation, and to the respective parts and members hereof, as the soul is to the natural body of a man, with the members thereof, which remaining in union with it, preserveth it from dissolution and putrefaction; or as the presence of the sun is to the light in the air, which retains its being, whilst the sun shines upon it, but vanisheth presently, and becomes that which is not as soon as the fountain of light withdraweth his shining. The Holy Ghost himself expresseth the dependence of creatures upon God in a borrowed resemblance of very near affinity with this: "Thou hidest thy face," saith David unto God, "they," *i. e.* the creatures, "are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." That great act of God, in itself so wonderful and inexpressibly glorious, the sustentation and upholding of the universe, with all the parts thereof, in being, is ascribed only to the setting or turning of his face towards it, to show, I conceive, that it is an act of special dignation and favour in him to preserve it, and yet withal an act of easy performance, and which costs him not the least labour or toil. A gracious look from him will do it effectually, as the contrary is enough to affright all things out of their beings, and (winch is equivalent hereunto, and in some cases more,) out of all that is desirable in their beings.

The Lord Christ is said, Heb. 1:3, *i. e.* to sustain, or bear up all things by the word of his power; which implies,

1. An utter impotency and weakness in the creature to stand alone, or to keep itself by its own strength from a recidivation, or relapse into its first vanity or nothing: for that which is able to preserve itself from falling needs no support, or bearing up by another.
2. That Christ feels no weight, or burden of the universe, whilst he supporteth it. The speaking of a word, especially within himself, and in his mind only, engageth no man's strength, nor putteth him to the least pain. This great act of bearing up the universe, is therefore, I conceive, appropriated unto Christ, though common to the other persons with him, because in his mediatory humiliation he laid a foundation of equity and reason, why God, notwithstanding that great provocation given by the sin

of man, to dissolve it, should yet consent to the standing and supportation of it. Such executions which depend upon his mediation, and for which there had been no place otherwise, are elsewhere in Scripture peculiarly asserted to him in respect thereof: see John 5:27. Though in respect of the Divine nature, power, and will, being one and the same in all the three persons, there is a necessity of their joint concurrence in all actings, *ad extra*, as the schoolmen call them, yet such of these actings, for which way hath been made by any personal achievement or transaction of any of the three, may, with a good savour of reason, be in a more special and remarkable manner attributed to that person, who hath more peculiarly interposed for the procurement of them.

When the apostle affirmeth that we live and move in God, in the sense declared, as well as have our essence or being in him, his meaning seems to be, that it is through God, and his voluntary closing with us, that we have and do enjoy all manner of accommodations of being, as well the greater and lesser, as essence or being itself. To live, oftentimes in Scripture, signifies the enjoyment of an happy and contentful condition, which signification is no ways inconvenient for this place. Or if the apostle be conceived to speak of the life natural, which is not improbable, he must be supposed to include all those noble and desirable faculties and endowments, as of reason, memory, judgment, understanding, speech, &c. which are appropriate to the life of man: so that when he saith we live in God, his meaning is, not only or simply that that spring or fountain of vital actions or motions in men, which in a district sense is termed life, is possessed, enjoyed, and held by means of a gracious and loving comportment of God with them for such a purpose; but that all that honourable retinue likewise of those excellent powers and faculties named, which attend upon the principle of life in man, is maintained in being by the same compliance also.

Whereas, he adds, that in him, also, GREEK, we move, or are moved, as the word rather importeth, he implieth, not only that all our vital actions and motions are exercised and performed by the gracious concurrence and compliance of God with us, as well as our Jives themselves, and principles of action preserved; but, further, that there is a further and appropriate concurrence of God required, and by him accordingly exhibited, to enable men to act those very principles of action

and motion that are in them, distinct from that by which their lives, and principles of action in every kind are preserved: insomuch, that though men be never so well appointed or provided for action in one kind or other, in respect of suitable, proper, and sufficiently disposed principles thereunto; yet, upon a suspension of that particular influence or concurrence by God, which is appropriate and necessary, both for the leading forth, unto, and for the supporting of these principles, in and under their proper actions, there is none of them will go forth into action, nor is able to maintain or support itself in acting. But whether such a concurrence of God supposed, and actually granted, as is sufficient both for the leading forth unto, and for the support of the principles we speak of, in their proper actings, these principles notwithstanding, at least such of them, whose actions lie under the command of the will, may not refuse or forbear to act, is another question, wherein more may be said hereafter.

In the meantime, that God may at any time separate between principles and their actings, even those that are most proper and connatural to them, only by withholding that compliance of his with them, which is appropriate and necessary for their conducting unto action, is evident from several passages in the Scriptures. Doubtless, the heat of the fire in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, being heated seven times hotter than ordinary, was as proper, as likely a means to have consumed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, being cast into the midst of this furnace, as those who were employed by the king only to cast them into it. Nor can it reasonably be said, that God separated the heat or burning property from the fire, or annihilated it, all the time that these three men were in the furnace. For, 1. Unless we shall suppose the subject itself, I mean, the fire, to have been destroyed or annihilated, we cannot suppose that heat, or a burning property, being a property inseparable from such, a subject, should be taken from it. 2. It appears by the story, that those who cast the three servants of God mentioned into the furnace, were consumed by the fire of it, whilst the servants of God remained in the furnace. Therefore, certainly, there was true fire and true heat in the furnace, whilst the three men continued in it. 3. And, lastly, the story saith, that "the princes, governors, and captains,. &c. being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power," Dan. 3:27. So that there is not the least question, but that there was real fire

and real heat, and that in abundance in the furnace; which notwithstanding had no power, no, not so much as over the hair of their heads, or the garments they wore. What now was the reason why this fire and this heat prevailed not over those that were cast into the midst of them, as they did over those who cast them in? Was it any other than this? the Lord of hosts' withdrawing the wonted conjunction of himself from the heat of the fire, and refusing to comply with it in that expedition or attempt, which it naturally inclined to make upon these men, as well as upon any others, to destroy them; whereas he kept his natural and accustomed union with this heat, in that attempt which it made upon those other men, who cast these into the furnace; by means whereof it suddenly prevailed upon them and consumed them. There was the same reason why the bush, which Moses saw burning with fire, was not consumed by it. The reason likewise, in all likelihood, why the men of Sodom could not find the door of Lot's house, was, because God withdrew his usual concurrence from their visive faculty, in order to the discerning of that object: for that other things were all this while visible enough to them, appears from their continued endeavours, even unto weariness, in seeking this door. If they had been wholly blind, so that they could have seen nothing at all, it is no ways credible but that they would have desisted their enterprise at the very first. This withdrawing or suspension of the wonted presence of God with the seeing faculty of men, is called "the holding of their eyes," Luke 24:16. "But their eyes were holden, that they could not know him:" , they were mightily or powerfully held: they could not act, or perform that which otherwise was most natural and proper for them to do, in receiving and representing to the sensus communis, or adjudging faculty of the soul, the true species and shape of a person standing visibly before them, and near to them, through the want of that accustomed co-operative presence of God with them in order to this act, which until now, it is like, had never failed them upon the like occasion. Other instances we have in Scripture of such like impotencies and deficiencies as these, in natural faculties, through the suspension of that sovereign presence with them, upon which all their motions and actions depend. See John 20:14, 15; 2 Kings 6:17, 18, &c.

When God threatened his people of old, "That the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of their prudent men be hid," Isa. 29:14, he doth not, I suppose, threaten an utter annihilation of those

principles or habits of wisdom and understanding in these men, but only an intercision or failing of such interposals and actings from, and by these principles, in order to the safety and preservation both of themselves and their state, which might reasonably, and according to the common course of second causes be expected from them; which wonder, as he calls it, was I conceive to be effected only by the hiding of his face from them, without the beholding whereof no second cause whatsoever is able to move, no, not in those ways of acting which are most appropriate to them. This manner of execution of the judgment here threatened, seems to be implied in those latter words, “And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid,” *i.e.* shall not be conspicuous or discernible in any fruits or effects worthy of it; not that the principle itself should be absolutely destroyed, or divested of being. This liberty, or great interest of God, which we speak of, I mean, to suspend the proper and most accustomed effects of second causes, by refusing to join in action with them, causeth that time and chance, as the wise man calleth them, which happen now and then in those occurrences of human affairs, as, viz. when “the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” &c. Eccles. 9: 11.

If it be here demanded, inasmuch as second causes and created principles, especially in men, act, notwithstanding such a subtraction of the Divine presence from them, as hath been declared, though not according to the perfection of their natures, but in a troubled and miscarrying manner;—the eyes of the two disciples we spake of, though they were so held, that they knew not Christ, viz. to be the person which he was, yet they represented him unto them as a man, &c.;—whether do such actings as these proceed from their principles without any such presence of the First Cause with them, as that, which we have asserted to be simply necessary for and with second causes, whensoever they go forth into action ; or what manner of presence of this first cause, or how differing from that which is constant, and more agreeable to their natures, shall we suppose they have with them when they act irregularly or deficiently ?

To this I answer:

1. Whensoever second causes move into action, whether they act congruously to their respective natures and kinds, or whether defectively, they still have, and must have, a presence of the first cause with them, as

hath been already argued. But,

2. When they fail or falter in their motions or actings, if their motions be such which are not moral, or commanded by the will, (of which kind the misrepresentation of the person of Christ by the eyes, or visive faculty of the two apostles was,) I conceive that the presence or concurrence of the first cause with them, is attempered and proportioned in order to the deficiency of the action; I mean as well to the degree as kind of this deficiency, and is not the same with itself in the ordinary and proper actings of these faculties. The reason hereof is, because faculties merely natural act determinately and uniformly after one and the same manner, unless they be troubled and put out of their way by a superior power. But in moral actions, and such whose deficiency proceedeth from the wills of men, or other creatures endued with the same faculty, the presence and concurrence of the first cause with the principles producing them, is not, at least ordinarily, different from that which is natural and proper to them, and by virtue whereof at other times they act regularly, or at least may. The reason hereof is, because the nature and intrinsical frame and constitution of the will, importeth a liberty or freedom of choosing its own motions, or acts; this being the essential and characteristical property of it, whereby it is distinguished from causes merely natural. Now then if this faculty, when it moves or acts inordinately, should be so influenced by the first cause, as hereby to be determined, or necessitated to the inordinacy of its actings: 1. That distinguishing property we speak of should be dissolved or destroyed, and the will itself hereby reduced to the order and laws of causes merely natural. 2. The inordinateness or sinfulness of the motions and actings of it, could not be resolved into itself, or its own corruption, but into that overruling and necessitating influence of the first cause upon it, which it was not able to withstand, nor to act besides or contrary unto the determining exigency thereof. And thus God shall be made the author of sin, which is the firstborn of abominations, even in the eye of reason and nature itself. But of these things more hereafter.

Though all the motions and actings of the creature, and created principles or faculties are absolutely suspended upon the association of the first cause with them in their actings, yet do they very seldom suffer any detriment, or actual suspension of their motions, or actings hereby; God never denying, suspending, or withdrawing that concurrence or

conjunction of himself with them, without which they cannot act, but only upon some special design, as, for example, now and then to be a remembrancer unto the world, that nature and second causes are not autocratorical, *i. e.* do not perform, what ordinarily they do perform, independently, and of themselves, but that he is the sovereign Lord of them, and hath all the strength and operations of them in his hand. The battle commonly is to the strong, and the race ordinarily to the swift, and bread most frequently to men of understanding, &c. But more of this also in the following chapter.

The apostle affirming, That in God we live and move, in the sense declared, passeth the sentence of condemnation against two opinions, which yet condemn one the other also, being two extremes, leaving the truth between them in the middle. The former denies all co-operation of the first cause with the second, affirming, That God only communiceth that operating virtue unto them, which they respectively exert and put forth, and preserveth it, but doth not at all co-operate with it. The latter affirmeth, That it is God only who acteth or worketh at the presence of second causes, and that these do nothing but stand by, act not at all. The former of

these opinions was held by Durandus, the schoolman, and by some others, far more ancient than he; against whom Augustin disputeth, Lib. v. de Gen. ad lit. c. 20. The latter, by Gabriel Biel, a schoolman also, and some others of that learning. The apostle's assertion, That we move in God in the sense asserted, is visibly, attended with these two consequential truths: 1. That God doth associate himself and communicate with second causes and all created principles, in their respective motions and operations; and consequently contributes more towards their motions and operations, than only by a collation and conservation of a sufficient strength or virtue in their respective causes to produce them. 2. That the ordinary effects, acts, and operations produced in these sublunary parts are not so, or upon any such terms attributable unto God, but that they have their second causes also respectively producing them, whereunto they may as truly, and perhaps more properly, be ascribed as unto God.



## CHAPTER 2.

**Though there be as absolute and essential a dependence of second causes upon the first, in point of motion, action, and operation, as of simple existence or being ; yet are not the motions, actions, or operations of second causes, at least ordinarily, so immediately or precisely determined by that dependence which they have upon the first cause as their respective beings are.**

THE simple existences or beings of things maybe said to be determined by God, the first cause, three ways. 1. In respect of their natures, or constituting principles of their respective beings. 2. In. respect of their production into being. 3, and lastly, In respect of their permanency or continuance in and with these natures and beings. In the first consideration they are absolutely, and in every respect determined by God; neither themselves nor any other contributing anything at all towards their natures or beings, in that sense, nor being in any capacity to withstand or make any resistance against that hand of pleasure and power which made them so or so, and imparted such and such a nature or frame determinately unto them. But secondly, in respect of their respective actual productions into being, they are not, at least a great part of them are not, so determined by God as in the former consideration. Men may sow more or less grain or corn in their fields as they please; and so likewise herbs in their gardens. Yea, the ordinary course and assistance of Providence only supposed, they have power to multiply individuals in some species of animal creatures; and. however, to restrain such a multiplication. Yea, doubtless many persons, both of men and women, have been propagated and born into the world, whose parents were not determined or necessitated to their generation. In the third and last consideration, thought things cannot, at least all things cannot, be said to be absolutely, positively, or irresistibly determined by God as in the first, yet doth his will and pleasure, for the most part, interpose effectually, though by the mediation of causes, either natural or moral, or both, for a determination in this kind also. The continuance of herbs, plants, and trees in their vegetative lives or beings, in respect of their species or kinds respectively, is determined by God, but by the

intervention of their several natures, temperatures, constitutions, or the like. So that those herbs, plants, or trees more generally, and in respect of their kinds, are longer lived whose tempers and complexions are more healthful and strong, and so better provided to resist and defend themselves against such inconveniences, which endanger and are destructive unto the lives and beings of such creatures as they. The continuance of individuals, or particulars in each kind of these vegetative creatures, in their respective natures or beings, is not so determined by God but that they are obnoxious, at least many of them, to the hand and will of man, who may at pleasure serve himself of which and of how many of them he pleaseth, being within the reach of his arm and under his power. A man may cut down, and suffer still to grow, which and how many of the trees growing in his own ground he pleaseth. Thus may he do also by the herbs in his garden. There is the same consideration in all respects of sensitive creatures also. The lives of many of these are subjected to the wills and pleasures of men.

Concerning the natural lives and beings of men in the world, neither is the continuance of these so absolutely or peremptorily fixed or determined by God, but that either themselves or others may either abbreviate and contract them, or else enlarge and protract them to a longer period by means proportionable unto either. By excess in sinning, and so by defect in caution, and use of means for their preservation, men may draw the evil day of death nearer to them; as by righteousness, and a prudent circumspection to prevent dangers and things destructive unto life, they may put it farther from them. "But thou, O God," saith David, "shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," *Psa. 55:23; i.e. the half of those days, which according to the course of nature, and providence, and will of God otherwise, they might have done.* To like purpose, Eliphaz in Job, speaking of a wicked man who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; *i. e. who sinneth at more than an ordinary rate of provocation;* "His branch," saith he, "shall not *be green*, but shall he cut off before his day. God shall destroy him as the vine his sour grape, and shall cast him off as the olive doth his flower," *Job 15:32, 33.* And again afterwards, "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? who were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood," *Job 22:15, 16.* It is probable he

here speaks of the old world, who because of that redundancy of wickedness which was amongst them, were destroyed by a deluge of waters, which otherwise they might have escaped; according to what our Saviour speaketh to Capernaum concerning Sodom, “If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day,” Matt. 11:23. And whereas God threateneth Ephraim, meaning the ten tribes, that “within threescore and five years Ephraim should be broken, that he be not a people,” Isa. 7:8; this judgment according to Musculus’s computation, was put in execution within twenty years after this prophecy, and that “propter enormitatem malitiae,” as he saith, *i. e.* for the enormous heinousness of their wickedness. So then, as God hath by no decree determined that men shall be wicked, especially not outrageously wicked, which we shall further demonstrate afterwards, so neither hath he determined that abbreviation of the lives of particular men, which their voluntary excess in wickedness brings upon them. He hath indeed determined indefinitely and in the general that bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but if we speak of any particular persons, who, being bloody and deceitful, came thereby to an untimely end, neither their sin nor their suffering by an untimely end was determined by God.

Again, That men, by a prudential and providential care in preventing dangers, sicknesses, and such inconveniences which are of a known malignity to the life of man, may advance their days to a greater number than under a contrary neglect, especially as the neglect for degree might have been, they would or could in reason have amounted unto, is evident. God himself informed David that if he staid in Keilah till Saul should come thither to demand him, which he was now ready to do, the lords of this city would deliver him up unto him, 1 Sam. 23:12, in which case he had been but a dead man: therefore David, by departing from Keilah before Saul’s coming down to demand him, added many days unto his life above what their number would have been had he neglected the Divine oracle, and, by staying in Keilah, fallen into the hands of Saul. The men that were with Paul in the ship, by hearkening unto his counsel for causing the mariners to abide in the ship, got enlargement of quarter for their lives, which, upon their leaving of the ship, had certainly been denied unto them; for Paul said unto the centurion and the soldiers, “Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved,” Acts 27:31; whereas,

upon their staying in the ship, “ it so came to pass that they came all safe to land,” ver. 44. The Lord Christ himself, by the care and faithfulness of Joseph in conveying him, being yet an infant, into Egypt, according to the charge of the angel which appeared unto him, came to see many more days in the flesh than he was like to have done in case he had been found in Bethlehem, or near to it, when Herod’s bloody inquisition came forth against him. For this is the reason which the angel gave unto Joseph why he was enjoined by God to remove the child Jesus into a place of safety: “Herod,” saith he, “will seek the young child to destroy him,” which supposeth not only a possibility, but a probability at least, if not a certainty, that, if the child had remained in or about Bethlehem, Herod both would have found him out and also destroyed him. So, afterwards we read, Luke 4., and elsewhere, that Christ, by declining the present rage and bloody intentions of the Jews from time to time, drew out the days of his mortal pilgrimage to that just period and hour wherein, according to his ever-blessed good pleasure, he had appointed that happy meeting between his own death and the life and salvation of the world.

True it is the days of human subsistence and continuance on earth are in the general but finite, yea, and few ; yet, if we speak of particulars, they are not properly determinate or set down as so many, and no more, by any decree of God. It is, indeed, appointed by God unto men once to die, Heb. 9:27; yea, as Job calculateth, within a short time : “Man,” saith he, “that is born of a woman is of few days,” Job 14:1; but I do not find it said of all particular persons that it is appointed unto them to die at such or such a time, day or year of their lives, or that they shall neither die sooner nor live longer. I deny not but that there are some few examples in Scripture of persons the precise number of whose days seemeth to have been fixed by God. His gracious message to king Hezekiah, being now sick unto death, was that he would add unto his days fifteen years, 2 Kings 10:6; yet this expression doth not necessarily imply that they should be adequately and precisely so many, and no more. Nor when Job, in passion, reasoneth thus with God, (as our last translation rendereth his words,) “Seeing his days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee: thou hast appointed his hounds, that he cannot pass: turn from him that he may rest,” &c., Job 14:6, 7, doth he suppose that the bounds and limits of all men’s lives are so rigidly or immoveably pitched by any decree of God, that they must of necessity live home to

them, and cannot possibly live beyond them; but only this, that if God will at any time interpose by his power to cut off the life of any man, he may determine and put a period to it without being resisted or hindered by any. According to the exigency of this sense, both Tremellius and Beza translate that clause “And the number of his months are with thee, out of the original, thus, “Numerusmensium ejus penes te est; *i.e.*, the number of his months is in thy power,” meaning, that thou mayest make them fewer or more, if, and as thou pleasest. Doubtless, if either David or Hezekiah had conceived the date and period of their lives to have been irreversibly concluded by any precedaneous decree of God, they would not have interceded with that affectionate importunity which is found in their prayers for a prorogation of them. “I said,” saith David, “O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,” Psal. 102:24; and again, “O spare me, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more,” Psal. 39:23. These expressions clearly imply that David apprehended as well a liberty in God as an executive power, either presently to take away or else to continue his life and being in the world for a longer time : for who will solicit a man to do that for him which he apprehends him in no capacity or possibility to do ? or for that which he conceives him whom he requesteth absolutely engaged and necessitated to do for him whether he requesteth it or no? Now, such a liberty in God as we speak of, and as David supposeth, was wholly inconsistent with such a peremptory and irreversible decree concerning the punctual extent and duration of his life which some imagine. So, when he fasted and wept for the life of his child, being sick, he neither supposed God bound by any unchangeable decree either to continue or presently to take away the life of it, but at liberty to do either. In the prayer of Hezekiah, though there be no express petition found for the enlargement of his life, yet there are grounds laid down which are proper to enforce such a petition upon, and by the tender whereof unto God it is evident that he did solicit for a reprieve, which is yet more apparent from that gracious return which God made unto him of this his prayer by the prophet Isaiah: “ Go,” saith God unto him, “ and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, and seen thy tears ; behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years,” Isa. 38:5. Therefore, doubtless, when Job saith, as we heard, that the days of man are determined, or, *praecisi*, *i. e.*, cut short, as Junius and Tremellius render it, and that God hath appointed his bounds

that he cannot pass, he doth not speak of any determinate number of days or years set out by any decree of his unto particular persons for life, which by no interveniency of means or occasions, on either hand, can either be diminished or protracted, but of that general counsel, purpose, or decree of his by which he hath reduced and contracted the mortal pilgrimage of man on earth to a very short and inconsiderable space of time.

Nor doth it follow from any of the premises but that God doth frequently interpose, and that after a very special and remarkable manner, sometimes for the preservation, otherwhile for the abbreviation and cutting off the lives of particular men. When God will undertake, and resolvedly engage to stand by the life of man, as now and then he doth, at least for a time, a thousand shall fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, and the danger not come nigh him; *i. e.* he shall remain as safe and as free from evil as if all danger of evil were far from him. “He shall not be afraid,” *i. e.*, such a man needeth not to be afraid, for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day,” Psal. 91:5—7. But daily experience sheweth that God doth not engage himself upon such terms as these for the protection of the lives of all that are godly, many of these falling by the hand of death even whilst the lives of thousands and tens of thousands round about them are not touched therewith: nor have any persons, though never so godly, any sufficient ground from the passages mentioned, or the like, to expect, absolutely and with confidence, protection of life in the midst of all such dangers which are there specified, hut only conditionally, *viz.*, if God will vouchsafe to undertake for their preservation and peace. Such scriptures hold forth the constant power, not the uniform will or pleasure of God. On the other hand, when God “taketh no pleasure,” as the Scripture phrase is, in the life of a man, the little finger of death is enough to crush it; my meaning is, a very, slender and inconsiderable occasion will serve his providence for the dissolution of it. But neither of these dispensations amounts to any demonstration of any such decree in God, wherein he hath punctually and indispensably assigned to all persons whatsoever a set number of years, months, days, hours, and moments for their allowance of life, which neither himself nor themselves, nor any other creature, hath the least liberty or power either to augment or diminish

upon any occasion or by any means whatsoever. It is indeed commonly reported to be a great article in the Turkish creed, that the lives of all men, at least of all Turks, are so absolutely disposed of in the counsel and decree of God, that it is a thing simply impossible for men, either by running upon the mouths of cannons, or by casting themselves into the sea, or by rushing naked into the midst of a host of armed enemies, or by adventuring upon any danger, upon any death whatsoever, to anticipate the date of such a disposal; and so on the contrary, by any care, prudence, or circumspectness whatsoever, to prevent the fatality thereof. But such notions and decrees as these are fitter to make Alcoran divinity than Christian. I freely acknowledge all the decrees of God to be absolute and unchangeable upon any occasion or by any means whatsoever, and none of them in a true and proper sense conditional; but I am far from making the decrees of God commensurable with his prescience or foreknowledge. But of this hereafter.

In order to a full and thorough explication of the subject last in hand, if this had been any material part of our present design, many particularities, besides those insisted upon, should have been added. But the consideration of the dependence of the motions and actings of the creature upon God, in respect of their determination, is more intimous to the heart and spirit of our grand intendment, than of their simple existences or beings. Therefore, (to pass on to the explication of this,) we have laid down for the argument of this chapter, this conclusion, (either in words or substance,) that the motions, actions, or operations of second causes, though they do as absolutely depend upon the first, as their existences or beings, (as was argued in the former chapter,) yet are they not by this dependence, at least ordinarily, so immediately or precisely determined as their beings. Notwithstanding how their beings, in respect of their natures, their productions, their subsistings, or durations in being, are determined or not determined by God, hath been the inquiry and decision of the preceding part of this chapter. We come now to inquire how far, and after what manner, the motions and actions of second causes are determined or necessitated to be both when, and where, and what they are, by that essential dependence which they have upon God.

All second causes whatsoever are reducible to one of these three heads or kinds: they are, either, 1. Such which act and move without any

knowledge or apprehension at all, (as being capable of neither,) either of the end, for the obtaining whereof they act or move, or of their motions or actings in order to this end. Or, 2. Such which are capable of some kind of knowledge or apprehension, both of their ends, and of their actings and movings towards these ends, but very imperfect and weak, viz., such which extend not to the reason or relation of these ends, nor to any deliberation about them, nor yet to the proportion or aptness of those their actings and movings for the obtaining of their ends. Or, 3. and lastly, they are such which know and apprehend, (or at least are capable of both,) not simply of those ends in order whereunto they act and move, but of the nature, reason, and further tendency of these ends also, as likewise of the proportion of likelihood of their engagements in any kind, for the obtaining of their ends. The first kind of these causes are called natural, or merely natural; the second, animal, or spontaneous; the third, rational, voluntary, or free-working. Of the first sort are, 1. all inanimate and lifeless creatures, as fire, water, air, earth, stones, minerals, and such like ;

2. all creatures which are endued with a principle of vegetation, hut not of sense. Of the second, are all animal or sensitive creatures, not partakers of any principle or endowment, above those of outward sensation, and a certain estimative faculty or phantasy, by which they first apprehend what is naturally good or evil for them, (at least in some particulars,) and, second, are acted and moved accordingly; as either to or from them, but without any deliberation or consideration had, either about the one or the other. Of this kind are beasts of the field, birds of the air, fishes of the sea, and generally whatsoever hath breath and life, excepting men. These are said to act or move spontaneously, because they act out of some knowledge of their end, without any compulsion or necessitation from without. Of the third and last sort are only men and angels, whether good or had, in either kind; who are therefore called rational, voluntary, or free-working causes, because they are capable not only of an apprehension or knowledge of such, ends, for and towards the obtaining of which they act and move, hut also of the nature, quality, and import of them, and of deliberation likewise, or consultation about the means and ways of their procurement.

Now though all these several causes have such a dependence upon God, that, as hath been said, none of them can move into action without a



suitable concurrence from him, yet are not their actions or motions thereby determined ordinarily, or necessitated unto or upon them. The reason why fire burns, or heats, and doth not moisten, cool, or the like, is not because God concurrerth with it when it acteth; for then air or water should burn and heat likewise, with a like concurrence. Therefore the particular and determinate actions of the fire are not caused by, do not flow from that concurrence of God with it when it acteth, but from that intrinsical form, or those natural properties which he hath vested in it by the law of creation. There is the same reason of other causes of this kind in their respective actions or effects. Nor are the motions or actings of the second kind of causes mentioned, as of birds, beasts, &c., any whit more determined than of the former, by the presence of God with them in their actions; but partly by their natural abilities for action or motion, partly by the natural proportions and disproportions between their respective estimatives or phantasies, and such and such creatures or objects, whose natures are either proportioned or disproportioned unto them. As for example, the reason why a lamb runneth to the dam, and fleeth from the wolf, is partly the natural sympathy between the phantasy of the lamb and the dam, and the antipathy between the said phantasy and the wolf; partly also that ability or nimbleness of motion which God hath given unto this creature for the conveyance of itself this way or that, according as the phantasy of it is affected. The concurrence of God with it when it runneth to the dam, and when it fleeth from the wolf, is, doubtless, one and the same; so that the difference of these two motions in this creature doth not arise from any diversity therein, but from one of the causes now mentioned.

In like manner, the actions and motions of the third and last kind of causes, which we termed rational and voluntary, are not determined, *i. e.* made rational and voluntary (much less, are they necessitated) by the conjunction or presence of God with them, when they act or move, but by their own proper and free election of what they act, or move unto. “Whilst it remained,” saith Peter to Ananias, speaking of his possession, whilst it was yet unsold, and remained with him in specie; “was it not thine own. Acts 5:4; *i. e.* wert thou not at full liberty to have retained, and kept it for thine own private use, there being no law of God imposing it as a duty upon thee, to sell it? “And when it was sold was it not in thy power?” viz., whether thou wouldst part with the money which thou receivedst for it, or

no? The word, translated power, doth not only signify a power of right, but of liberty also, or a freedom of will to dispose of it, as he pleased; otherwise, a power of right had been of no accommodation unto him, nor any competent matter of the aggravation of his sin. “Why hast thou put this thing into thy heart ?” viz., to dissemble and lie; pretending and professing to bring the whole money which thou receivedst for the possession, when as thou bringest a part of it only? God concurred with the motion of Ananias’s will, when he resolved to bring his money to the apostles for public distribution: and so likewise, when he brought it, otherwise he could, not have resolved or willed to do it. Yet this concurrence of God, with him in his act of willing or resolving, did not make it necessary for him so to will or resolve, because he had a power, this notwithstanding, to have willed or resolved the contrary; I mean, either the keeping of the possession to himself, being yet unsold; or the not bringing the money received for it to the apostles. Otherwise, both the act of selling it, and also of bringing the money to the apostles, must be looked upon, not as the acts of Ananias, but of God himself. For whatsoever a man is necessitated to do, especially by a principle of force, or power out of himself, is the act of the necessitator, not his. Yea, the apostle Paul counteth it no flattery either of himself, or any other man, to acquit both himself and them, of all such irregular acts, whereunto they are necessitated, though by an inward and inherent principle. “Now,” saith he, “if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” Rom. 7:20. It is true, the act of Ananias’s will, both for the selling of his possession, and bringing the money to the apostles, in the very instance of the elicitation or production of it, was necessary in this respect, viz., because now it could not be unproduced, according to the common maxim; everything that is, when it is, must of necessity be ; but it was not the concurrence of God with his will, that imposed any necessity upon him to produce it, because then it had not been in his own power; neither had it been properly his own act, when produced.

But it may be here objected and said, that though the specifical actions or motions of all the causes mentioned be determined, (as hath been proved,) by the specifical natures or properties of every of them respectively, and not by any concurrence of God with them, yet their individual and particular actions and motions are determined by some kind of concurrence, or providential interposal of God. As for example,

that fire, in the general, burneth that which is combustible being put to it, is, from the nature of it, not from any concurrence of God with it; but that it burneth such or such a man's house, goods, or the like, this is not simply from the nature of it, without some special disposal of Divine Providence. So, again, that wicked and ungodly men should, in the general, do wickedly, as, for instance, plot, contrive, accomplish the death of such as are godly, proceedeth from themselves, and from the corruption of their wills, not from any concurrence of God with them, nor from any special interposal of his in such actings. But that such and such wicked men by name, should plot, and effect the deaths of such and such godly men by name, and not the death of others, godly also, proceedeth not so much from the wickedness of such men, as from some special decree of God, together with a suitable interposal of his providence and power, for the effecting of it. That which Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the Jews, did, in and about the crucifying of Christ, Peter saith, that "the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done," Acts 4:28. To this I answer,

1. That this particular and signal attribution of some special actions or events unto God, or to the determination of his hand and counsel, (other instances whereof are to be seen, 1 Kings 12:15; 2 Sam. 17:14; Jos. 11:20; Deut. 2:30, &c.,) clearly argueth, that ordinarily actions are performed by men, and events come to pass upon other terms; I mean, without any such particular or extraordinary interposition by God, either by way of decree, or of providential efficiency, or contribution towards them. Emphatical and remarkable appropriations are unsavoury and impertinent, where all particulars are of one and the same consideration.

2. It is no where said, that the hand or counsel of God determineth before that such or such evil actions shall be done by such or such particular men, or that such or such men shall do these and these evil actions; but only that such and such things shall be done. It is not said, that the hand or counsel of God had determined before that Herod, Pontius Pilate, such and such of the Gentiles and of the Jews, should have their hand in the crucifying of Christ; but only that these were gathered together, and levied their joint endeavours to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done, or come to pass. Notwithstanding the determination of God beforehand concerning the crucifying of Christ, yet were Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the rest, at as much liberty to have

declined all manner of compliance with the action, as they could have been in case no such predetermination had passed in the counsel of God. For it is not here said, that God gathered Herod, or Pilate, or any of the rest together, to act in this business; but, (as our former translation read it,) that they gathered themselves together. Thus Calvin also translateth it, “Convenerunt enim,” &c., *i.e.*, They came or met together, &c. Nor doth the passive reading of the word, were gathered together, imply any acting, much less any compulsive acting on God’s part, in uniting or drawing them together about such a work. For such actions, which proceed from men themselves, or from their own wills, are frequently in Scripture (and may with propriety of speech enough be) attributed unto them in terms of a passive signification. “But every man,” saith James, “is tempted when he is *drawn away* of his own lust, and *enticed*,” James 1:14; so also Paul, “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly Women, *laden* with sins, *led away* with divers lusts,” 2 Tim. 3:6; and again, “For some are already *turned aside* after Satan,” 1 Tim. 5:15, besides many others. And if God, who hath so severely prohibited the shedding of blood, or the taking away of any man’s life unjustly, should any ways incline or dispose, or especially compel, men to the perpetration of such things, should he not be divided in, or against himself? and then, according to the process of our Saviour’s argument, how should his kingdom stand? Matt. 12:26. Therefore,

3. Some interpreters, as Chrysostom, (Ecumenius, Prosper, and others, do not refer the decree spoken of (Acts 4:28,) to the sin. of those who crucified Christ, but to the effects and fruits of his suffering in this kind. According to this interpretation, the sense of the place will rise thus, “Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, &c., met together to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done;” *i. e.* whereas God had before determined to redeem and save the world by the delivering up of his Son unto death, *i. e.* by leaving of him to the wills and pleasures, and in the hands of such men whom he infallibly foreknew would put him to death, Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., did now accordingly rise up, and though knowing nothing of the determinate counsel of God concerning that which should follow upon their wicked act, yet did that in crucifying Christ which effected, it. Notwithstanding, to speak properly, the redemption and salvation of the world were not the effects of their act in crucifying Christ, but partly of the determinate counsel of God in

leaving him in their hands for such a special purpose; partly of the obediential humility, and voluntary subjection of Christ himself to his Father's will and pleasure in that kind. So that that which the hand and counsel of God determined, was not the act of Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., in putting him to death, but his own providential act, or permission, in leaving him in their hands for such a purpose. God need not determine that before to be done, which he knew would be done without any determination of his in that behalf. See verse 18 of the second, and verse 23 of the third chapter of the Acts. But,

4, and lastly, for the true and genuine sense and purport of the passage in hand, it is to be considered: 1. What the main intent and scope of it is. 2. How the words and phrases in the passage may and must be understood in order hereunto.

For the first, evident it is that the young converts or Christians, who are said to have uttered these words with one accord, intended hereby the magnifying of God (together with the strengthening of their own faith) for his most gracious and wonderful dispensation, in and about the death and sufferings of Christ; as viz. that in order to the redemption and salvation of the world, he should so far dispense with the counsels and methods of his ordinary providence in protecting the innocent and righteous, as to expose or leave his holy Child (or Son) Jesus, the most innocent and righteous person of all others, to the rage, malice, and cruelty of wicked men, yea, so far as to suffer death itself from them. There is no consideration able to reconcile the providence or permission of God in leaving a person of such infinite worth, holiness and greatness, as the Lord Christ was, in the hands of wicked men, with principles of reason, equity, or prudence, and so to render it worthy faith, but only some great and signal design to be accomplished and effected by it. Hence it is, that in their mention of what Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews had done unto Christ in crucifying of him, they cast and fix their eye upon the hand and determinate counsel of God; *i. e.* upon the special counsel and decree of God not to interpose by any power or providence of his, to prevent or divert the malice and rage, either of these, or of any other wicked men, that should have attempted the same thing, from crucifying the Lord of life, though so innocent and holy a person as he was. Here is not the least intimation of any counsel or determination by God, that any of the persons here mentioned, or any others, should

have acted in, towards, or about the death of Christ; but only that those things should be done, *i. e.* be permitted, or suffered by God to be done, as we shall show further presently, which these men met together to effect and perpetrate. Nor was it any ways necessary that God, in order to the salvation of the world by Christ, should determine or decree, that such and such men by name should crucify or put him to death ; no, nor yet that Christ should be actually crucified by any man or men whatsoever: for the effecting of this great and blessed design it was sufficient for God to determine and decree, that in case any man, or number of men, should attempt his death, he would not restrain or hinder them from effecting it.

If it be objected, but did not the redemption and salvation of the world depend upon the actual death, or crucifying of Christ? and if so, should not God have left this great and gracious design of his in suspense, and at uncertainty for matter of execution, in case he had not absolutely and positively decreed the death of Christ by one means or other, as either by those who now did effect it, or by some other men ? To this I answer,

No: the salvation of the world, doubtless, did not depend upon the actual or literal dying, or crucifying of Christ, but partly upon the counsel and good pleasure of God, to deliver him up unto death in order to this end; *i. e.* to leave him freely unto men to crucify him if they would, partly upon the readiness and perfect submission of will in Christ to suffer death, in case any man or men should be found that would inflict it upon him. My grounds and reasons for this opinion are:

1. If the salvation of the world depends wholly and entirely upon the merit and satisfaction of Christ, in conjunction with the will and good pleasure of God the Father to accept of this satisfaction in order thereunto, then did it, doth it, no ways depend upon anything done by other men, especially wicked men, least of all upon anything done wickedly and provokingly in the sight of God by them ; and, consequently, the actual or literal crucifiers of Christ contributed nothing at all simply necessary towards the salvation of the world. *Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius.*

2. If the merit of Christ received no addition, was no ways perfected by the actings of those who crucified him, or by the things which he suffered from them, then did not the salvation of the world depend upon his being actually crucified, or upon his crucifying by men, but only upon that

crucifying, wherewith he had crucified himself before men came to lay hands upon him. Sed verumprius: ergo et posterius. That the merit of Christ was no ways perfected or augmented by the things which he suffered from men is evident, because he acted or did nothing herein, or under these sufferings, more than what he had done before in the inward transactions of his soul; yea, and would have done still, or again, whether men had crucified him or no.

3. If the acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ depended only upon, 1. The nature, quality, and legitimacy of the sacrifice. 2. Upon the legitimacy and dignity of the priest offering. 3, and lastly. Upon the legitimacy of the manner observed in the offering, then was not the act of those who crucified Christ any ways contributing towards the acceptance of this sacrifice; and if so, the acceptance hereof with God had been the same, and consequently the salvation of the world, purchased and procured by it, whether men had interposed to crucify Christ or no. Evident it is, that they who crucified Christ neither gave legitimacy to the sacrifice ; nor were any legitimate priests, upon whose actings about the sacrifice the acceptance of the offering any ways depended; nor, 3. Did they in what they did about the crucifying of Christ, observe any legitimacy of order or manner which should render the oblation acceptable with God. Therefore the acceptance of that great sacrifice we spake of with God, depended wholly upon. Christ himself; who, 1. In respect of his person, was a legitimate sacrifice to make that great atonement for the world that was made by him. 2. In respect of his office, was a legitimate high priest, anointed by God to offer that great sacrifice of himself. 3, and lastly. By virtue of his holiness, love, zeal, and all other heavenly endowments requisite for his office of priesthood, performed the oblation with a perfect observation of all the requirements appertaining to the law or manner of such an offering. In none of all these had he the least dependence upon those who put him to death; nor stood he in need of their wickedness in crucifying him, to make him either sacrifice, priest, or oblation of highest acceptance with God.

4. The apostle expressly affirmeth concerning men, that “if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted” (meaning with God) “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,” 2 Cor. 8:12. His meaning clearly is, that where there is a dear, perfect, and upright desire of soul in any man to perform any service pleasing unto God, but wants

opportunity or means for the actual or complete performance of it, and shall go in or towards the performance as far as he hath opportunity or means to carry him, such a man finds the same acceptance with God under these deficiencies which he should find under an actual and complete performance. This is that which divines commonly express in saying, that God accepts the will for the deed. Now there is no reason to conceive or think but that God should deal in a way of as much equity and grace with Christ as he doth with other men. Therefore supposing that there was a clear, perfect, and entire willingness or readiness of mind in Christ to lay down his life for the world, but he had wanted an opportunity actually to have done it, (as suppose no man should have appeared to take away his life from him,) there is no sufficient reason to think but that he had been accepted with God upon the same terms under, or in respect of such his willingness or desire, on which he is now accepted under his actual death.

5, and lastly, If it was the deep humility and perfect subjection to the Father's will and pleasure, together with those other inward and gracious deportments of soul in Christ, in and under his sufferings, which gave the whole and entire worth of merit and satisfaction unto them, then were his bare external sufferings considered apart from these no ways meritorious; and consequently of no absolute necessity for, or towards the redemption of the world. *Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius.* The former consequence in this argument is evident, because nothing, whether action or passion, can be meritorious without something in it or relating to it, which should give it the weight or worth of merit. The latter consequence is no less evident neither. For whatever, whether doings or sufferings, are wholly void of merit, though, they may some ways contribute towards the work of redemption, yet can they be no ways essential or of absolute necessity thereunto. For the minor; neither is this much questionable; the Scriptures themselves from place to place, placing the value, merit, or expiatory worth of the death and sufferings of Christ, over and besides the dignity of his person, in his innocency, meekness, humility, perfect subjection to his Father's will, &c. Let these passages be considered. Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26—28, with many others of like import. Now certain it is, 1. That the excellency and dignity of the person of Christ was and would have been the same. 2. That the innocency, humility, love, patience, obedience of Christ were,



and would have been the same also, whether he had actually and corporally suffered or no. Therefore whatsoever was properly, formally, or essentially meritorious in Christ, was in him before his sufferings of a natural death, and would have been in him whether he had suffered such a death or no; and consequently the work of redemption might have prospered in his hand, whether he had thus suffered or not.

If it be demanded ; but doth not this doctrine suppose or make Christ to have died in vain? yea, and contradict all those scriptures which ascribe the redemption and salvation of men to his blood, death, cross, and suffering? I answer, neither; it is most free from both these erroneous impieties. From the former, because the death of Christ is sovereignly necessary upon several other accounts; as firstly, If he should not have actually yielded up himself unto death, there being found those that would, and did, attempt it, it must needs have been conceived and concluded by men, that he was not truly, inwardly, and really willing and free to have laid, down his life for the world; and consequently there had been no ground or footing for any man to believe either that he was the Son of God, or that he was meritoriously qualified for the redemption of the world. Secondly, Had he always declined actual dying, under those frequent attempts made by men to take away his life, it could not have been known (and so not upon any sufficient ground believed) that God the Father delivered him up to death; and consequently his will and good pleasure concerning the salvation of the world by his Son could not upon any competent terms have been believed. Thirdly, The prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the actual sufferings of Christ could not have been fulfilled. Fourthly, Upon the said supposition as, viz., that he had an opportunity through the blood-thirsty malice of men to lay down his life actually, if he should not have done it, that great example of his humility, patience, self-denial, love of the brethren even unto blood, &c. had been wanting in the churches. Fifthly, and lastly, Upon the supposition mentioned, the actual dying of Christ was altogether necessary in respect of the inward frame and disposition of his soul, which rendered him freely willing to lay down his life, in case it should be required of him, at or after such a time as his Father judged it meet to permit the execution. Now such a frame and disposition of heart and soul as this, was, as was formerly argued, absolutely necessary to be found in Christ, to qualify him for a Redeemer: and being found in him, it could not possibly but

produce his actual death, when men should attempt it, and God no ways interpose to prevent it. Thus then you see clearly how the doctrine which denieth an absolute necessity of Christ's actual and external death, in order to the salvation of the world, no ways rendereth or supposeth this death of his to be in vain.

Nor doth the doctrine we now speak of contradict any of those scriptures which attribute the redemption and salvation of the world to his blood, death, sufferings, &c. For when we are said to be healed by his stripes, 1 Pet. 2:24; to be "justified by his blood," Rom. 5:9 ; to "have redemption through his blood," Eph. 1:7, &c., it no ways supposeth or implies, that the literal or material shedding of his blood by men, was simply and absolutely necessary, either to the justification, or redemption of men, but only that a shedding of it, by himself, spiritually, in that great act of resignation of it to be shed by men, which passed, and was transacted inwardly in his soul, whether it had been externally shed by men, or no, was simply and absolutely necessary thereunto. There is scarce any phrase or idiom of speech more frequent in Scripture, than to mention and speak of an act simply, and indefinitely, as performed and done, when the doing of it hath been fully resolved, concluded, or consented unto in the heart and soul, whether ever it be actually and externally done, or no. Thus, Abraham, in the same verse, is twice said to have offered up his son Isaac, Heb. 11:17, only because he was inwardly, really, and folly willing to have offered him up literally, which yet we know he did not. So a man is said to "forsake all he hath," Luke 14:33, when he is inwardly and unfeignedly willing and resolved to forsake all, literally and actually, when he shall be called to it, whether he be ever so called or no. In this phrase of speech, God is said to have given the land of Canaan unto the Israelites, Josh. 1:3, when as he had only purposed, or resolved to give it unto them, as appears verse 6. So to have saved us,. 2 Tim. 1:9, only because of his full purpose to save us, upon our believing. So again, to have rejected Saul from being king, 1 Sam, 15:23, only because he was fully purposed to reject him, upon his impenitence in his rebellious course; for evident it is, that Saul was permitted to enjoy his kingdom a considerable space of time after it was said that God had rejected him from being king. In like manner he is, said, chap, 13:13, to have established, (for so Arias Montanus translates out of the original, viz, "stabilierat," and our former English translators, "had established,")

the kingdom of Saul upon Israel for ever, only because he was purposed to do it, and that conditionally too, viz. upon the good behaviour of himself and his posterity in. the throne. It were easy to multiply instances in this kind, even unto weariness. In like construction of speech, Christ may be said to have given his flesh, laid down his life, shed his blood, for the redemption of the world, justification of men, &c., and consequently, the world be said to be redeemed, and men justified by his blood, death, cross, &c., only because he was freely willing, unfeignedly ready and prepared to do all these actually, when the providence of God, and the wickedness of men should afford him an opportunity to do them. Nor can it be said, that, in such a sense, he should ever the less have given his flesh, laid down his life, shed his blood for the salvation of the world, than now he hath done, in case the providence of God, and wickedness of men, should never have conspired or agreed about the taking away his life from him. It was his blood, as shed by himself, not by men; it was his life, as laid down by himself, not as taken from him by men; it was his flesh, as given or offered by himself, not as sacrificed by wicked men, which produced those glorious and blessed effects, the redemption, justification, and salvation of the world. Now Christ, to shed his blood, in such a sense as he shed it; to lay down his life, in such a manner, as he by any act or consent of his, concurred and acted towards the laying of it down; and so to give his flesh, as he gave it, needed not the malice, violence, or bloody injustice of men, but did all this, performed all these acts within his own sphere, yea, and had performed them, before the least drop of his blood was spilt by men; and consequently the redemption and salvation of the world were provided for by him in all things essential, and simply necessary thereunto, before either Herod or Pilate, the Gentiles or the Jews interposed with any of their counsels or engagements for the crucifying of him.

Thus, then, we see what the Christians mean, in saying that “ Herod, and Pilate,<sup>1</sup> with the Gentiles and people of Israel, gathered together to do whatsoever the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done viz. to act towards, in and about the death and crucifying of Christ to the uttermost (*qucecunque*) of what God had before upon a special account and design, determined, or decreed to permit them to do, or rather, to permit to be done, notwithstanding his hand or power to have prevented them. For, to touch the second thing propounded, the word

GREEK, translated, to be done, doth not import any eventual certainty, or indispensable necessity of the coming to pass of those things, which Herod, Pilate, &c. gathered themselves together to do, and accordingly did, about the crucifying of Christ; but only the possibility, or, if we will, the probability of their coming to pass upon the determined permission of God in that behalf. For that the permissive decree of God, doth not import the certainty or necessity of event in things so decreed, is afterwards proved in this chapter. It is a form of speech frequent in the Scriptures, to speak of things probable, or likely to come to pass, as if they should or would simply and certainly come to pass; and so again to use the infinitive mood in a potential sense, or signification. An instance of the former we have, Deut. 13:11, "And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you." The meaning is not, that it shall certainly and infallibly thus come to pass, viz. that no Israelite, hearing of the judgment executed upon the idolatrous seducer, would ever commit the like wickedness afterwards, but that the hearing of such a severe course taken with such an offender, should be a probable and likely means to preserve others from the like wickedness. Another passage of like expression and import, you have, Deut. 17:13, and again, Deut. 9:20; see also Gen. 21: 6; Num. 14:13, 14; John 11:48, to omit other the like without number. An instance of the latter we have, Rom. 1:20, GREEK *i.e.* That they might be, or that they may be, as our last translators render it in their margin, or, that they should be, as our former translators had it, without excuse, viz. in case they glorify not God as God. See also Rom. 4:11, where the infinitive mood is twice used in such a potential sense as we speak of. So when Christ saith unto Simon and Andrew, Mark 1:17, "Follow me," GREEK "and I will make" or cause "you to be" or, to become "fishers of men," his meaning is not, that upon condition they would follow him, he would compel, or force them to be "fishers of men," he might have done this as well without persuading them to follow him, but that he would furnish them with such wisdom and knowledge, with such a heavenly art and skill, that if their hearts would serve them for the employment, they might, and should, be excellently accomplished and fitted by him, for the drawing of men out of the world unto God. See also Mark 10:44; Luke 8:35; 23:24.

And, to cite no more places upon this account, which readily might be done to a far greater number, in the next verse save one to the words in

hand, the same speakers express themselves thus: GREEK *i. e.* “And that signs and wonders *may be done* by the name,” &c. So that whereas in the scripture in debate, we have the original, translated, to be done, as if the meaning were, that the hand and counsel of God had positively and conclusively determined, that all those things should be done, which now were done by Herod, Pilate, &c., about the crucifying of Christ; it might, as properly, with as much consonancy to the Scripture dialect and phrase elsewhere, and, questionless, with far better agreement with the truth, be rendered *might be done*. And then the sense of the whole passage imports no more but this, that Herod, Pilate, &c., were gathered together to do the uttermost of what God had long before, even from eternity, graciously and sapientially determined to permit and suffer them to do, in and about the death and crucifying of Christ. So then here is nothing in this Scripture to prove, that God peremptorily decreed or determined beforehand the crucifying of Christ by Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, or the Jews, or by any other persons; but only that in order to his great and blessed design of saving the world, he thus decreed, that either these, or any other, in case these had not done it, should be at liberty to perpetrate this great wickedness, and that he would not by his hand or power interpose to hinder them, in case they should attempt it, which he from eternity foresaw, and certainly knew that they would.

This sense of the place is fully confirmed from all these and such like expressions in Scripture: “Who was *delivered up*” (meaning by God) “for our offences,” Rom. 4:25. So again, “He that spared not his own Son, *delivered him up* for us. all,” *See.*, Rom. 8:32. And again, “Him being *delivered!*” (given out, viz., out of the protecting or rescuing hand of God;) “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified,” &c. Acts 2:23. Such passages as these evidently show that God went no further in any of his determinations or decrees about the actual crucifying of Christ, but only to a delivering of him up, *i. e.* to a leaving of him unguarded, unprotected, for wicked men to do with him, thus far, even what they list; not to any necessitating of any person or persons whatsoever to lay violent hands upon him. If it be objected, But how doth it stand with the wisdom of God to determine events beforehand; without determining means or instruments which shall infallibly produce, or give being unto them ? or, doth he determine anything, the effecting whereof he leaveth in the

liberty and power of men, so that they may choose whether it shall be effected or no ? I answer, 1. In the general, that God never determineth anything but what he either provideth means himself, or else knoweth himself sufficiently provided otherwise to bring to pass; viz., according to the tenor, manner, and form of his determination. But,

2. Whatsoever God determineth to do, or to be done, in case or upon such or such a supposition, though his determination itself be absolute and independent upon any condition whatsoever, yet the event, or the thing determined upon such terms, is suspended upon the condition included in the determination. As for example, it cannot be denied but that God had determined to destroy Nineveh within forty days after warning given hereof by the preaching of Jonah, Jonah 3:4. For doubtless if he had not purposed or determined the thing, he would not have engaged his prophet to preach and assert it in his name. But because the tenor and form of this his determination was conditional, importing only a purpose in him to inflict the judgment determined, in case they humbled not themselves within so many days after the denunciation of this judgment as determined by him, their humiliation and repentance intervening within the time limited in the determination or decree, the judgment determined was not executed; nor did the tenor of the determination import any other, than the non-execution of the judgment determined in such a case. A like instance we have, 1 Sam. 2:30, "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed" *i.e.* I purposed, or determined, "that thy house, and the house of thy father should walk before me," (viz., in the office and dignity of the priesthood,) "forever. But now the Lord saith, be it far from me: for them that honour me I will honour; and they that, despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The purpose or determination of God for vesting the priesthood forever, *i. e.* during the use and continuance of it in the world, in Eli's house, was absolute, not alterable or changeable, by any intervention, one or more, of what nature or kind soever. But what, then, was the tenor or form of this determination or purpose? not categorical, or simply assertive, as, viz., that the priesthood should remain in this house or family forever, how much soever it should at any time degenerate from itself in sin and wickedness; but hypothetical and provisional, thus: the priesthood shall remain forever in Eli's house, provided that his house remains faithful, and observant of the law of their God concerning this dignity. This purpose or determination of God I call

absolute and unchangeable, because “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,” by any interposition whatsoever, could, or should have hindered the said duration or continuance of the priesthood in Eli’s house, in case it had remained faithful. The Scriptures abound with instances of like consideration with these See 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:21, &c.

3. God may leave the execution or fulfilling of his determinations, such as they may be, at the free liberty and in the power of men, and yet have assurance and certainty enough that they will be executed and fulfilled. For being infinite in wisdom, and so able to discern and comprehend the most secret, subtile, and tickle proportions and connexions between causes and effects, such as are altogether undiscernible both unto men and. angels, as between the will of a man, attended with such and such principles and notions of things in the understanding, for her guide in her elections, and again with such and such objects, circumstances, and occasions about her, and between all possible or imaginable elections or actions in such a case; God, I say, through the infiniteness of his wisdom, being able to penetrate, calculate, and compute all and all manner of relations and aspects, between all and all manner of causes and effects whatsoever, is able infallibly, without all possibility of error or mistake, to foresee not only all men’s actions and ways, what they will be from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being conscious to his own model, platform, and intentions for the government of the world, but likewise what they would have been, had himself been pleased to have carried the government of the world, I mean, in circumstances and occasions relating to it, otherwise. He did not only foresee that Saul would come down to Keilah, which he did; but also , that the lords of Keilah would have delivered David into Saul’s hand, in case he had staid there till Saul’s coming and demanding of him, which they did not, because they were prevented of the opportunity by David’s departure from them before, 1 Sam. 23:11, 12. So that in this sense God may be said to determine what will or shall be done in the world by men; not by determining or decreeing to bow or bend their wills by any immediate or physical influx or acting of his power upon them, much less by necessitating or compelling them to their respective elections; but by determining or decreeing, either to suffer them to remain so and so

affected or inclined, and under the power and guidance of such and such principles, which he certainly foreseeeth that they will drink in; or else to put new principles of light into them, by the influence whereof he also clearly foreseeeth that the tenor and frame of their wills and affections will, freely alter and change ; and withal to give being to such and such circumstances, providences, and occasions, which have such or such an aspect upon or reference unto them in such or such a posture. Upon these terms, the hand and counsel of God might and did absolutely determine the giving up of his Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross, and yet not determine either that Herod, Pontius Pilate, or any other person or persons by name should have acted in this his determination; knowing certainly, 3.1. That these men would act it freely and without being any ways determined, yea, or in the least degree excited by him hereunto.

3.2. That in case these had not acted it, there were enough in the world besides that would. But,

4. Concerning those actions of men, with their consequences, productions, and events, which are so emphatically and signally, as hath been said, attributed unto God; the reason of this attribution, I conceive, is, partly because the conjunction of such principles in men, and providences about men, between which the actions we speak of are begotten and produced, is somewhat particular and. rare; partly also, and chiefly, because the event and consequence of such actions, are some special design and intendment of God, as is clearly to be seen in the instances already pointed at. Deut. 2:27, compared with ver. 30; Josh. 11:20; 2 Sam.17:14? ; 1 Kings 11:15; and Acts 4:28, compared with Rom. 4:25, and 8:32, &c. Therefore,

5. Concerning the ordinary and constant motions and actions of other creatures in the world, though the least of them cometh. not to pass without the knowledge and foreknowledge of God (in such a sense as foreknowledge is attributable unto him), nor without his prudential disposal of them to their, or rather his, respective ends, yet can they not be said to be determined by him in any other sense, or consideration, than this, viz. as he was the Author of such and such determinate natures, properties, and beings in the creation, which, by his ordinary concurrence with them for support and action, are apt to move or to act after such or such a manner determinately. The regular and respective motions, shillings, influences of the sun, moon, and stars, the flowing of rivers



from their fountains, together with the decurrency of their waters into the sea, with a thousand things besides of like consideration, are no otherwise determined by God than has been said.

6. Concerning the particular motions, actions, and exertions of such creatures, or causes, which though merely natural, do not move, act, or exert uniformly or without variation, but with, a latitude and disproportion in their motions and effects, there is ground, I conceive, to judge that God doth, at least sometimes, though not so frequently as is commonly presumed, providentially interpose beyond his ordinary concurrence to occasion or bring to pass such a variation. As for example, that the same ground, with the same labour, cost, and skill of the husbandman bestowed on it, doth not yield a like proportion of increase one year which it doth another; so again, that the same fruit-bearing trees are barren one year, and well bearing another; that the seas are pacific and commodious for passage at one time, in such parts and places of them, as when such and such ships, with such and such persons in them, pass through them, where they are turbulent and dangerous at another time, when such and such other ships and persons in them pass the same way, with many more particulars of like consideration, the reason, doubtless, of the variety and diversity of occurrences or effects in this kind, is not always to be resolved, either divisim, or conjunctim, only into the native properties of the causes, whether mediately, or immediately producing them, or into the ordinary and standing concurrence of God, with these causes, for or in producing them; but there is somewhat a more particular hand of the great Ruler of the world, which forms and fashions them in such different shapes; and that in order to such and such ends, which though sometimes apprehensible enough, yet for the most part are very hard for men to call by their names. Only this remains true, that in such occurrences and events, as those now specified, notwithstanding that great diversity found between them, yet ordinarily all particular causes interested in the production of them, act in a regular and due conformity to their respective natures and properties, and are not forced or turned out of their way by any immediate power or interposal of God. And that which he doth in order to a diversification, when the difference is preternatural and signally from him, consists either in a multiplication of, or a subtraction from, the number of causes, which, according to the course of nature and ordinary providence, would

have joined in raising the effect, or else in suspending either in whole or in part, or in augmenting the operating virtue of one cause or more present with those, which together raise and produce the effect; which suspension and augmentation, though in a sense they may be called miraculous, yet are they not direct or perfect miracles, partly because they are not so obvious to any of the outward senses, partly also because, though they be unusual and rare, compared with the course of ordinary providence, yet are they frequent in such kinds of dispensation, which are either signally penal or munificent.

7. Concerning such occurrences and casual events, wherein or whereby any creature suffers loss either of being or well-being, in what kind or degree soever, neither are these determined by God, though he takes special knowledge of them both before and when they come to pass, and contrives them accordingly to their most appropriate ends. When our Saviour teacheth his disciples that a sparrow shall not fall to the ground, *i. e.*, be taken, killed, or hurt, without his heavenly Father, his meaning is not to assert a particular decree or determination in God concerning the death or hurt of every sparrow that either dieth or receiveth harm, but to show that God is vigilant and careful in his rule and government of the world, and taketh exact notice how his creatures suffer or are diminished. It is more proper of the two, and nearer to the truth, to say and hold that God determineth the preservation or keeping alive of these sparrows which fall not to the ground, than that he determineth the falling to the ground of every one that so falleth. The reason is, because the object of God's determinations or decrees is only that which is good, whereas things indifferent and things that are evil are the object of his knowledge as well as that which is good. But of this more hereafter. So when any man's person, house, or goods are consumed or hurt by fire, there is no competent ground to say or think that any of these were determined by God, or that they might not have been prevented; for certain it is that he decreed not either the negligence or carelessness, nor yet the malice, of those who through either the one or the other were the authors of such accidents.

If it be said, Yea, but the permission of such accidents as these is good, otherwise God would not permit them to be; and if so, then such a permission may be the object of God's determination and decree; and If God decreeth the permission of a thing, doth not this include or suppose

a necessity that it shall, will, or must come to pass? If so, it is as much determined or necessitated by God's permissive decree as if it had been directly and peremptorily decreed by him. To this I answer,

It is indeed the judgment of some learned men, that the purpose or intent of God to permit or suffer such or such a thing to be done, or such or such an accident to come to pass, supposeth a necessity, at least a syllogistical or consequential necessity, of the coming of it to pass. But that the truth lieth on the other side of the way appears by the light of this consideration. If whatsoever God hath decreed or intendeth to permit to come to pass in any ease, upon any terms, or any supposition whatsoever, should by virtue of such an intention or decree necessarily come to pass, then all things possible to be, or at least ten thousand things more than ever shall be, must be, yea, and this necessarily; for, doubtless, God hath decreed, and intendeth, to leave natural causes generally to their natural and proper operations and productions; yea, and voluntary causes also, under a power and at liberty to act ten thousand things more than ever they will do or shall do. For example, God intendeth and hath decreed to permit that fire shall bum what combustible matter soever it shall take hold of, or that shall he cast into it; that one spark of it falling into a barrel of dried gunpowder should suddenly fire it, & c.; hut it doth not follow from hence that therefore everything that is combustibile in the world shall be burnt with fire, or that every barrel of dry gunpowder shall be blown up with sparks of fire falling into them. So, in the instance formerly mentioned, God had decreed to permit the lords of Keilah to deliver up David into Saul's hand, in case he had staid in their city till Saul's coming to demand him: this is evident from the text, 1 Sam. 23:12. But it did not follow from this permissive decree of God that therefore these lords must necessarily deliver up David into Saul's hand; for we know they did it not. So, likewise, God hath decreed to permit any man to destroy the life of another whom he meets with, I mean, in respect of a natural power to do the execution; but it followeth not from hence that therefore every man must necessarily murder or destroy the life of his brother that cometh in his way. So that evident it is, that no decree of God whatsoever which is simply and purely permissive, doth import any necessity at all of the perpetration or coming to pass of the thing so decreed. God permitted Adam to eat of every tree in the garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil only excepted, Gen. 2:16, 17,

and therefore certainly had decreed or intended this permission ; yet was not Adam any ways necessitated by any virtue or influence of this decree upon him to eat of every of these trees ; nor is it in the least degree credible that ever he did eat of every of them, nor yet of any of them, but only that which was prohibited unto him, his ejection out of his garden following so suddenly after this patent or permission granted unto him. The reason why no decree of God, that is purely and barely permissive, either induceth or supposeth any necessity of the coming to pass of what is only so decreed, is this: First, because no such decree doth any ways interest God to any manner of interposal either by his wisdom, power, or providence, in what kind soever, towards the effecting or bringing to pass of what is so decreed. So that such events, which are no otherwise decreed by God than thus, are in the same posture of contingency, in the same possibility of being or not being, wherein they would have been had there been no such decree at all concerning them. Secondly, neither doth any such decree in God suppose a futurity of such a concurrence of causes simply requisite and necessary for the bringing of things so decreed to pass which will actually bring them to pass. Though God hath decreed that a spark or coal of fire falling, *i. e.* in case it shall fall, into a barrel of gunpowder, shall fire it, yet it doth not follow from hence that he hath decreed that any such spark or coal shall fall into it, without which, notwithstanding the effect decreed, *viz.* the firing of this powder, will not come to pass Or, if it be said that God hath decreed that such a spark or coal shall fall into the said barrel of powder, now is not the decree barely permissive, but operative and assertive, and such which engageth the decreer to interpose effectually for the bringing of the thing decreed to pass. But such decrees as this, in matters of that nature, we deny to be in God.

If it be yet further objected, Yea, but all events, and whatsoever cometh to pass at any time, in any place, or with relation to any person whatsoever, are foreseen and foreknown by God; and if so, then is there an absolute and unavoidable necessity of their coining to pass, otherwise the foreknowledge of God shall be but conjectural, obnoxious to error and mistake, not certain or infallible. To this I answer,

1. By concession, *viz.*, that the knowledge of God (for foreknowledge, if we speak properly, is not compatible to him) is all light, and there is no darkness in it at all: all possibility of error or mistake are ten thousand

times farther from it than the heavens are from the earth. But,

2. I answer further, by way of exception, that notwithstanding the certainty of the knowledge of God concerning things that daily and hourly come to pass, and that will come to pass hereafter, yet there is no more, no other necessity of their coming to pass, in respect of such his knowledge, than there would or should have been, in case no such knowledge were, or had been in him. For certain it is, that no knowledge, as such, hath any influence at all upon the object or thing known, to cause it to be, or not to be.

If it be replied, Yea, but if God knows that such and such things will come to pass, is there not a necessity of their coming to pass ; or otherwise, must not the knowledge of God prove abortive, and he accompanied with error.

I answer, no; if the events supposed to be known by God before their coming to pass, be contingent, or, at least, such in the production whereof the wills of men must some ways or other interpose, if ever they be produced, (of which kind of events only we now speak,) the certainty of the knowledge of God may be salved, and yet no absolute necessity of the coming to pass of such events be supposed. The reason is, because at the same time when God seeth or knoweth that they will come to pass, he seeth and knoweth also, that there is no necessity they should come to pass, but that they may well be prevented. In which respect, in case they should not come to pass, the knowledge of God should suffer no defeature or disparagement.

If yet it be said, Yea, but when it is supposed that God knoweth that such or such an event will come to pass, if it should be supposed withal that he knoweth it may not come to pass, or that it may come to pass otherwise, than according to this knowledge, doth not this suppose or imply a consciousness in God of the weakness or deficiency of his knowledge ?

I answer, no; but rather the contrary; viz., a consciousness in him of the strength and perfection of his knowledge. For he that knoweth not that contingent and free-working causes, which way soever they shall act in order to any particular event, might yet act otherwise, or suspend their actings, is certainly defective in knowledge. And if God did not as well know that there is a possibility of the non-futurity, or of the not coming to pass of such contingent events, which he knoweth will come to pass, as

well as he certainly knoweth that they will come to pass, he should be defective in his knowledge concerning the nature and property of contingent and free-working causes, inasmuch as this is their nature and property, (as hath been said,) to be at liberty in reference to particular actings, to act one way as well as another, or else to suspend their action. Indeed, if it should be said or thought, that any event will not, or *shall* not, come to pass, which God knoweth beforehand will come to pass, this would import an obnoxiousness unto error in the knowledge or foreknowledge of God. But to say, or think, that such an event, whose future coming to pass God knoweth, *may*, notwithstanding this knowledge of his, not come to pass, reflects no dishonour or disparagement at all upon his knowledge, but rather gives an honourable and high testimony of excellency and perfection unto it. For he that certainly knows what contingent and free-working causes will do, notwithstanding their freedom and liberty either to do, or not to do, or to do otherwise, must needs be excellent in knowledge indeed, and one who needeth not count it robbery to be equal with God.

Concerning the acts of the wills of men, which are called, I know not how properly, supernatural, I mean such which have an essential connexion with their eternal happiness and glory, how, or how far, they are determined by God, and how, and how far not, we shall be better fitted with an opportunity to demonstrate in the process of our discourse.

In the meantime, the reason why the great commander and Lord of nature leaveth his whole militia ordinarily to move and act according to their native properties and inclinations respectively, without countermanding them, or turning them out of their way, are these, with their fellows: First, nature with all her train and retinue of particular causes, together with all their furniture of principles for motion and action, being the workmanship of his own hand, if he should ordinarily or frequently interpose to change her laws, or innovate her course, he should seem to pull down that which himself hath built up, and to dislike that portraiture and resemblance of himself, which he hath drawn with admirable and unimitable art and skill in the regular and standing progress of nature and second causes. Secondly, being conscious to himself, with what excellency of wisdom, goodness, and power, the great body of nature with all the parts and members of it, was at first raised, built, framed, and tempered by himself, he knows there is no need for

him either to add to, or to take from, or to alter anything ordinarily in her course. He hath sufficient security that his handmaid left unto herself (only with his ordinary and regular concurrence, without which she can neither move nor be) will no ways misbehave herself in order to his ends, and those concernments of his glory wherewith she is intrusted. So that for him to check, or control her in her way, would be but a kind of condemning the innocent, which is, when practised amongst men, an abomination to him. Thirdly, and lastly, if he should customarily, and of course overrule nature or second causes in their regular proceedings, he should overlay his own market for miracles and works of wonder, and bring down the price of the glory and esteem of them to a very low rate. In the days of Solomon, silver was but as stones, nothing esteemed, 1 Kings 10:21—27, by reason of the abundance and commonness of it. Miracles are the rarities of heaven, and the reserve of nature when her testimony concerning the glory and power of her Lord and Master is despised by men.

### CHAPTER 3.

**Concerning the foreknowledge and knowledge of God; and the difference between these, and his desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees: and how these also are distinguished the one from the other.**

IT is not to be denied, but that the Scriptures do attribute GREEK, or foreknowledge unto God in several places, as Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2, &c. Though evident it is that in some, if not in all of these places, the word rather imports a preapprobation than a simple prescience or foreknowledge, according to the known signification of the simple word which, though properly it signifieth knowledge, yet in Scripture language, according to that idiom of speech, wherein the consequent is put for the antecedent, not unusual in the Scriptures, frequently imports approbation, as Matt. 7:23; Rom. 11:2; 2 Tim. 2:19. But as many other things are oft in Scripture attributed unto God, which, according to the proper and ordinary signification of the words, are no ways competible to him, as hands, eyes, ears, grief, repentance, &c.; so is prescience or foreknowledge also. Notwithstanding as there is a ground in reason, one or more, for all those other metaphorical and improper attributions, which are in any kind made unto God, so is there for this of prescience also ; only care and caution must be taken that our table proves not a snare unto us; my meaning is, lest those things which are metaphorically spoken of God for the accommodation of our understandings, and to enrich us with such conceptions, apprehensions, and knowledge of him, as we are well capable of, according to the truth of his nature and being, be not so interpreted or understood by us, as to occasion any such fancies or imaginations in us, which are unworthy of him, and inconsistent with the truth of his being.

That prescience or foreknowledge are not formally or properly in God, is the constant assertion, both of ancient and modern divinity. The learned assertors of the protestant cause are at perfect agreement with their adversaries the schoolmen, and papists, in this. Nor is it any wonder at all that there should be peace, and a concurrence of judgment about such a point as this, even between those Who have many irons of contention otherwise in the fire, considering how obvious and near at



hand the truth herein is. For, Firstly,

If foreknowledge were properly and formally in God, then might predestination, election, reprobation, and many other things be, properly and formally in him also; inasmuch as these are, in the letter and propriety of them, as competent unto him as foreknowledge. Nor can there be any reason given for a difference. But impossible it is, that there should be any plurality of things whatsoever, in their distinct and proper natures and formalities, in God, the infinite simplicity of his nature and being, with open mouth gainsaying it. Secondly, If foreknowledge were properly or formally in God, there should, be somewhat in him corruptible or changeable. For that which is supposed to be such a foreknowledge in him to-day, by the morrow, suppose the thing or event foreknown should in the interim actually come to pass, must needs cease and be changed; inasmuch as there can be no foreknowledge of things that are present, the adequate and appropriate object of this knowledge, in the propriety of it, being *res futura*, somewhat that is to come. Thirdly, and lastly, There is nothing in the creature univocally and formally the same with anything which is in God. The reason is, because then there must either be somewhat finite in God, or somewhat infinite in the creature; both which are impossible. But if prescience or foreknowledge, being properly or formally in the creature, should be properly or formally also in God, there should be somewhat in the creature, univocally and formally the same with somewhat which is in God. Therefore certainly there is no foreknowledge, properly so called, in God.

If it be objected, that this argument lieth as strong against the propriety of knowledge, as of foreknowledge, in God; inasmuch as knowledge is every whit as properly and formally in the creature as foreknowledge; I answer,

True it is, there is no knowledge neither in God, according to the precise and formal notion of knowledge, or in such a sense wherein it is found in men; and this the first and last of the three reasons mentioned do infallibly demonstrate. Knowledge in the creature is a principle or habit, really and essentially distinct from the subject or soul where it resideth: yea, and is capable of augmentation and diminution therein, and of separation from it. Whereas that which is called knowledge in God, neither differs really or essentially from his nature, or from himself, but is really one and the same thing with him (as will further appear in the

following chapter), nor is it either capable of growth, or of decay, or of separation. Only in this respect, knowledge, of the two, is more properly attributable unto God than foreknowledge, viz. because foreknowledge, in the proper notion, or formal conception of it, includes, or supposeth, a liableness to a change or expiration, viz. upon the coming to pass of the thing foreknown, which must of necessity come to pass in time; whereas knowledge imports nothing but what may be permanent and perpetual, and so is of the two more appropriable unto him who changeth not.

But though neither knowledge, nor foreknowledge, can in strictness and formality of notion be ascribed unto God, yet since both the one and the other are frequently in Scripture attributed unto him, necessary it is that we make inquiry into the grounds and reasons of such attributions. For it is no ways credible but that the Holy Ghost in all such expressions did intend to inform the world of somewhat, and that according to truth, concerning God. Now the method and way, in general, whereby to discover, upon what grounds or reasons the Holy Ghost attributeth such things unto God, which yet are not formally or properly competent to him, and consequently what it is in God, of which by such expressions he desireth to impart the knowledge unto us, is this, to consider the respective natures, the different manners of operation, the divers effects, or ordinary consequences of those things in the creature, whether they be actions, passions, habits, parts, or whatsoever, which are upon such terms attributed unto God. For still we shall find something or other proceeding from God, or done by him, which holds proportion and correspondeth with some or other, one or more, of the ordinary effects or consequents of those things in the creature which are so attributed unto him; and the intent of the Holy Ghost in ascribing such things unto God, which are proper only to the creature, is to make known to us that the Divine Essence, or God himself, hath that eminently, after a transcendent and most perfect manner in his nature or being, which always enableth him, and in respect of some particulars upon occasion rendereth him actually willing to express himself in. such kind of actions or effects, wherein the creature is wont to express itself upon occasion, out of and by means of such principles or instruments of action, being in the propriety or formality of their respective natures in them, which are ascribed unto God. As for example, to give the world knowledge, that the Divine nature can, and upon just occasion will, yea, and doth many times, express itself

after such a manner, and with such a kind of effect, as men use to express themselves out of anger, as, viz. by reproving, expostulating, withdrawing themselves, striking, punishing, and the like, the Holy Ghost oft ascribeth the passion, or impression of anger, unto God. There is the same consideration of all those other creature affections, as of love, zeal, grief, sorrow, repentance, delight, mercy, compassion, &c. And so also of all those organical parts or members of a human body, as eyes, ears, hands, heart, &c., which are so frequently in the Scriptures attributed unto God. These respective attributions give the light of this knowledge of God unto the world, that the Divine nature, though most singly, simply, most undividedly and indivisibly one, is yet able, out of the infinite perfection of it, to act all that variety and diversity of action and effect which the creature is wont to act out of such affections, and by means of such organs or members respectively.

To come in to the particular in hand. The Scripture is wont to ascribe knowledge unto God, to inform the world, that what kind of contentment soever men reap, or receive, by means of any knowledge of things which they have, and that what regular use or advantage soever they make, or are capable of making in any kind of such knowledge, God receiveth the like contentment by, maketh, when and as he pleaseth, the same or the like use of the infinite perfection of his nature or being. For example: men of knowledge and of understanding, so far as their knowledge extendeth, are free from errors, mistakes, and other inconveniences, in reference to the things known, whereunto men that are ignorant are exposed. Again, men that have knowledge of things are hereby, according to the measure and extent of this knowledge, enabled to manage and order their affairs to their best advantage, either in a way of profit, or of repute and honour; yea, and being otherwise furnished with opportunity and means for such a purpose, to communicate and impart the same light of knowledge unto others, which shineth in and to themselves. In like manner knowledge, yea, the “knowledge of all things,” 1 John 3:20, is in Scripture asserted unto God, not because he knoweth them after the same specifical manner, or upon the same specifical terms, upon which men know or understand the things known by them, (for as “the Lord seeth not as man seeth,” 1 Sam. 16:7, so neither doth he know as man knoweth,) but because, from and by means of the infinite perfection of his nature, 1. He enjoyeth himself with a scientific contentment; (I mean, with such a

kind of contentment as knowing men enjoy, or might enjoy, by means of their knowledge;) and, 2. Because by the same means he is enabled to manage, order, and dispose of all things, to the best advantage and improvement for his own glory, and for what other end besides he pleaseth; and, 3, and lastly, Because he hath an opportunity also thereby to impart the knowledge of what things soever he pleaseth, unto his creature.

By what hath been said, it is no matter of difficulty either to conceive or to declare in what sense, or upon what ground, one or more, the Scriptures attribute prescience also, or foreknowledge, unto God. For look what regular conveniency, opportunity, or advantage in any kind, the foreknowledge of things in men affordeth unto them, the like doth the infinite perfection of the Divine nature exhibit and afford unto him. Men who have the certain foreknowledge that such and such things will come to pass at such or such a time, if they any ways relate unto them, or be capable of being wrought to such a relation, besides the inward contentment of such knowledge, have an opportunity thereby, not only of making known beforehand unto their friends or others, that at such a time such things will come to pass (for this they may do, whether the things foreknown do any ways concern them or no), and by this means gain the repute of being prophetical, or otherwise very understanding and discerning men; but also of contriving and ordering other things in the meantime so and after such a manner, that the things foreknown, when they come to pass, shall come to pass with more conveniency or advantage unto them, than otherwise they could. have done. Upon such considerations as these, the foreknowledge of things, yea of all things that are future, is by the Scriptures ascribed unto God; viz. because through the infinite perfection of his essence and being, he, 1. Enjoys a delight or contentment answerable to that of foreknowing men, by means of this their knowledge. 2. He is able to impart beforehand at what distance of time he pleaseth, either to his saints (his friends) or others, such particularities of what is hid in the womb of time, as himself judgeth meet to be upon such terms as these revealed; 3, and lastly, He is able also providentially to dispose of all such things to the best advantage, both for his own glory, and the benefit of those who shall be found worthy of this great interest in him.

From the rule that hath been given, and the explication made

according thereunto, for a right understanding how and in what sense, and upon what grounds, both knowledge and foreknowledge are in Scripture transferred unto God, a clear light shineth whereby to discover how, and upon what grounds also, desires, purposes, intentions, or decrees in one kind or other, are by the same authority vested in God, as likewise how they differ both from his knowledge and foreknowledge. That desires, intentions, purposes, and decrees, as well as knowledge, or foreknowledge, are only anthropopathetically ascribed unto God, not formally, the former part of this chapter, I presume, hath given the tantamount of many demonstrations. So that clearly and distinctly to understand, how, and in what sense they are in Scripture attributed unto him, inquiry must be made, and consideration had, how they are wont to affect or engage men; after what manner, and upon what terms men are usually acted and drawn forth by them. Only before we come to the explication hereof, this is to be remembered by way of caution, that though there always be, as hath been said, a ground or reason, one or more, for that attribution of human actions, affections, members, &c. which the Scriptures so frequently make unto God, which reason is still founded in a certain proportion or similitude found between the nature of God and the nature of man, in respect of the things so attributed unto him, yet is it not necessary that all things accompanying, or relating unto these affections or impressions in men, which are attributed unto God, should be paralleled in him, or have something in his nature corresponding to them.

It is a sufficient ground or reason for the attribution, if the human affection, or impression attributed unto him, be in respect of any one particular appertaining to it in men, paralleled or analogised in the nature of God; the proverbial maxim well admonishing, that similitudes are not wont to run on all four," no, nor always on three, nor yet on two; they do service enough if they stand well on one. To exemplify our caution in a particular or two: anger, as it is incident unto, and sometimes as it is inherent in man, is obnoxious to be attended with unseemly behaviour, inconsiderate and unjust actions, &c., yet it doth not follow from hence, that because God is said to be angry, therefore there is that in his nature which renders him obnoxious in either of these kinds. It is a sufficient ground of the attribution of this passion or affection unto him, that out of the perfection of his simple essence, or nature, he doth

anything upon occasion, which is proper or frequent, for men being angry, to do; as that he sharply expostulates, or reproves, that he smites those who provoke him, with any severe stroke of judgment, or the like, &c. So again, expectation in men is always attended with an apprehension that the thing expected will indeed come to pass; no man expecting that which he knows certainly will never come to pass; yet it doth not follow from hence, that because expectation is ascribed unto God, therefore he must not know but that the thing expected by him will come to pass. It is a sufficient ground of ascribing expectancy unto him, that out of the perfection of his simple essence, or nature, he sometimes deporteth himself, as men under expectation are wont to do, though it be but in some one particular; as that he apprehendeth a probability or likelihood, in respect of means, motives, and engagements, that the thing which he is said to expect will come to pass; notwithstanding he certainly knoweth withal, that what he is said in this kind to expect, will, all that probability or likelihood notwithstanding, never come to pass. Instances hereof we have, Esa. 5:2, 4, 7; Matt. 21:37—39, &c. Take yet one example more for the better understanding of the premised caution. Purposes and intentions, where they are in the letter, and in their propriety, as in men, are always found in conjunction with a supposal, that the things purposed or intended shall or will be effected; no man ever intending or purposing that, which he certainly knows beforehand never shall or will be effected. But it doth not follow from hence, that when purposes or intentions are attributed unto God, they must needs be thus attended; I mean, with a supposition or expectance, that the things said to be purposed or intended by him shall or will come to pass. Therefore that saying of Mr. Rutherford, Exercit. p. 224. “*Tenentur omnes credere Deum omnipotentem sua intentione excidere non posse,*” *i. e.* All men are bound to believe, that God being omnipotent, cannot fail of his intention, is less considerate, yea, and defective in truth, without the help of some further explication. If instead of intention, he had said decree, thus: all men are bound to believe, that God, being omnipotent, cannot fail or fall short in any decree, so as not to be able to put it in execution, reason and truth had greeted each other in. such a saying. But God may he said, as we shall see further anon, to purpose or intend things, in case he affordeth means that are proper and sufficient to bring them to pass, especially if he commands them to be used accordingly; this being a

dispensation of like consideration and nature with the deportment of men, who are wont to provide a sufficiency of means, at least so apprehended by them, for the effecting of what they purpose or intend. So that to reason thus: God intendeth not the salvation of all men, because he certainly knoweth that all men will not be saved, no wise man ever intending that, which he certainly knows beforehand shall never be effected, is to reason weakly, and upon a false supposition, viz. that purposes and intentions are attributed unto God in respect of all particulars, or under all circumstances, wherewith, they are accompanied in men : whereas such attributions are sufficiently salved, as hath been shown, in the analogy and similitude of one particular only.

Yet before we can conveniently come at our intended explication., how and in what respect, or sense, desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees, are by Scripture assignment transferred upon God, necessary it is that the difference between them in point of signification and propriety of import, together with the signification, of some other terms of near consideration with them, be examined and clearly stated. For that these words, desire, purpose, intention, and decree, do not precisely signify one and the same thing, is out of question: nor are they ascribed unto God in one and the same signification or respect: though it is true there is a word frequently also ascribed unto him, I mean the word will, which, in the latitude of the signification of it, comprehendeth them all; yea and some other too besides these. For what God more properly may be said to desire, he is in a more general term often said to will: so again, what in more propriety and strictness of expression, he might be said, and sometimes is said, to purpose, intend, decree, and to command or persuade unto, he is very frequently said to *will*. So that this word will, when it is attributed unto God, must be differenced in point of sense and signification, pro subjecta materia, according to the different exigency of the context and matter in hand, in such places where it is respectively used, as we shall show presently. But to the four terms mentioned:

First, to desire, according to the precise and strict import of the word, as it is appropriable unto, and found in men, signifies only an act of appetency in the heart or soul of a man, towards somewhat that is absent, whether in respect of simple being, or of place only, and withal apprehended by the desirer, as connatural and suitable unto him, either in respect of his own personal conveniency and accommodation only, or

the accommodation also of some others whom he wisheth well unto. How it differs from the other three will plainly enough appear in the progress. Secondly, to purpose or intend, for between these I conceive there is very little difference, if any at all, in point of signification, properly signifieth such an act of the heart or soul, by which they resolve or engage themselves to interpose and act towards the effecting or bringing to pass of the thing purposed or intended, being always such a thing which is apprehended good and convenient for them, so far as they judge it meet, and agreeable to principles of wisdom and good discretion. If there be any difference between them, it lieth, I conceive, rather in point of strength or degree, than in nature and kind; a purpose, being an intention, in *fieri*, as the schoolmen's expression is, *i. e.* in the making; and an intention, a purpose in *facto esse*, *i. e.* completely made. But they are taken promiscuously the one for the other, and so may be, without any inconvenience, as far as yet I apprehend. For the fourth and last of the four words mentioned, decree, this properly importeth such an act of the heart or soul, by which men resolve, determine, and conclude, to act to the uttermost of their strength and might, for the bringing to pass of the thing decreed, which is still presumed to be somewhat that is of grand concernment unto them for good. Now though the difference between desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees, be discernible enough, by their respective descriptions that have been given, compared together; yet will it, I conceive, appear to more satisfaction, by a distinct assignment of their respective operations or effects which they produce in men. For, if the tree be known by the fruit, the difference of trees may be known by the difference of the fruits also. First, then, the simple desire of a thing, and as such, doth not engage a man to act at all towards the effecting or procurement of it: a purpose or intention engageth unto action in this kind, but under provisoes, and with limitation. A decree, strictly and properly so called, doth not simply engage unto action, for the bringing to pass of the thing decreed, but engageth home, without any exception, reservation, or proviso whatsoever, save only that of sufficiency of strength or power for matter of execution. A desire, if it be intense, and raised to any height or strength, and the nature of the thing desired be such that the procurement of it lieth, either in whole or in part, within the power of the desirer, and withal opposeth not, in his apprehension, either the enjoyment or procurement of somewhat more desirable unto him,



always advanceth into a purpose or intention of obtaining the thing so desired. Otherwise, if it be either languishing, faint and low, or the thing desired be no ways, in no kind, attainable by anything the desirer can do; or if his engagement for the obtainment of it be conceived by him as likely to prejudice him in any other matter of greater moment; in all these cases the desire subsists within itself, and advanceth not neither into intention nor action.

Secondly, Desire, when it is boiled up to a consistency or fixed substance of a purpose or intention of obtaining the thing desired, by means of this superadded act or further impression upon the soul, being in conjunction with it, it engageth the desirer, being now a purposer and intender likewise, to act and give out himself in the use of means for the obtaining of the thing desired and intended, as far as he judgeth it meet and well-standing with the rules of wisdom and discretion for him to go. Only this is to be remembered, that there is no man, at least no considering man, that so far desireth anything as to intend or purpose the obtaining of it but that he so far engageth himself in the use of means for the procurement thereof as he judgeth reasonable and sufficient for such an attainment. If men do not advance such a proportion of means, which, in their own apprehensions at least, is sufficient to compass what they purpose or intend, it argues a vanity, or nullity rather, in their intentions. But, on the other hand, there is no ground or reason to conclude from the non- assecution or non-obtaining of a thing, yea, though a man hath a sufficiency of power in some kind to obtain it, that he did not really and unfeignedly purpose and intend the effecting of it. A man takes a long journey to a person of quality and in great place; the end and intent of his journey is to obtain a suit or courtesy at his hand: in his addressment to him he demeans himself with all respects of honour and observance; useth many reasons and arguments of great weight to persuade and overcome him. The person sued unto standeth off, and refuseth to gratify the petitioner unless he will submit to such and such terms, which are very inconvenient and dishonourable to him. The petitioner being a man of conscience and honour, refuseth the terms, and so returns ungratified in his motion. In this case, though he might, with making a breach upon his conscience and honour, have obtained that which, he had sued for, yet his non-obtaining it upon such terms doth no ways argue hut that he really desired it, yea, and purposed and intended the obtaining of it, if it

might have been procured upon meet and honourable terms. Many cases of like consideration might be put.

Thirdly and lastly, To decree, (in the strict and formal signification of the word, for otherwise purposes and decrees sometimes interchange significations,) importeth such an act of the mind and will of a man whereby he doth not simply or only purpose or intend the effecting of what he desireth, but this upon such terms, with such strength of intention and resolution, that it carrieth Him against and above all possible intervention of any dissuasive circumstance whatsoever, one or more, to the effecting thereof. So that a purpose or intention and a decree, in strictness of notion respectively, may be distinguished by their objects thus: A purpose or intention respecteth that which is desirable, yet not simply and absolutely desirable but upon such and such terms, under such and such circumstances: a decree respecteth that which is simply and absolutely desirable, and from the prosecution whereof a man ought not to be taken off by any consideration whatsoever. We speak now of regular purposes and decrees, and such which are conceived and taken up by men according to principles of sound judgment and understanding.

By the tenor and manuduction of these things, which are evident and unquestionable, we may come readily and steadily to conceive and understand how and in what sense desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees are and may be ascribed unto God. First, it is considerable that desires and purposes or intentions, are never separated in God: he never desireth anything but what he purposeth or intendeth to effect. The reason is, because whatsoever he apprehendeth suitable to him and of tendency to his glory, which is the adequate object of his desire, he always interesteth himself to effect. Matters relating unto his glory being the only object of his desires, impossible it is that any of these should be so weak or faint as not to advance and rise up into a purpose and intention, and consequently into action; especially considering, 1. That there is nothing which concerns his glory but which lieth within the compass of his power to effect; and, 2. That, by reason of his infinite wisdom being in conjunction with a power every ways commensurable to it, he is able so to manage all the concernments of his glory as not to prejudice himself in any, in or by the prosecution of others. But,

Secondly, Though desires and purposes, or intentions, cannot be separated in God, yet intentions or purposes, and decrees, may. God doth

not always decree the effecting of what he purposeth or intendeth to effect, though he always purposeth and intendeth to effect what he decreeth. The reason why he doth not always decree to effect what he purposeth or intendeth to effect, is, because he judgeth it meet to act only to a certain degree of efficiency for the effecting and obtaining of some things, by which, if he cannot effect or obtain them, he judgeth it not meet to act any further or higher in order thereunto. But because he never acteth for or towards the effecting of anything but with a due and full sufficiency of means, (the whole course and compass of his efficiency in this kind taken together,) he may well and truly be said to purpose and intend whatsoever he engageth himself to effect, though with the lowest degree of efficiency, wherein at any time, and in reference to any end, he appeareth.

If you ask me, But what are the things in particular, or any of them, which God may be said to purpose or intend, and yet not to decree ? I answer,

1. In general: they are all such things for the procurement and effecting whereof he vouchsafeth means, and these sufficient, (for he never starveth his ends for want of means, as hath been often in effect said,) and yet the things themselves many times are not obtained nor ever come to pass; in which respect he cannot be said to decree them, because his decree, according to the proper notion of the word, formerly opened, carrieth all before it, against and above all opposition and contradiction whatsoever, and never faileth to bring forth.

2. In particular: the faith and repentance of all men, the honest and upright lives of all men, and consequently the peace, happiness, and salvation of all men, are some of the principal of the particulars inquired after. For, 1. Evident it is that God interposeth and vouchsafeth means for the effecting and procurement of all these, (of which more hereafter,) in which respect, according to the grounds laid, he must needs be said to purpose or intend them. And yet, 2. Every whit as evident it is, that these things are not effected or obtained, nor ever will; in which respect they cannot be said to be decreed by God, according to the proper notion of a decree, oft specified.

To draw up a full and clear account from the particulars argued, (with as much brevity as may be,) how, in what sense, and upon what grounds desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees are attributed in Scripture unto

God: First, in the negative, that none of them are attributed unto him upon any such ground or supposition as this, viz. as being properly or formally in him, *i. e.* after such a manner as they are in men, really distinct and separable from his nature or being, hath been already asserted, and that, I suppose, with a nemine contradicente. Therefore, secondly, in direct pursuance of our preparatory instructions formerly also delivered in order to the business in hand, the said four particulars must be acknowledged, as attributed unto God upon this ground, viz. because the infinite perfection of his nature and being enableth, yea, and leadeth him to act, and give out himself after some such manner, and with such a kind of efficiency, reasonable allowance being made for the great disproportion between him and the creature, as the said particulars, desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees being found in men, are wont to engage them unto. So that, First, God is said to desire or will, such and such things, because the goodness of his nature leadeth him to act and give out himself, and to vouchsafe means for the bringing of them to pass; it being an essential property of desire in men, 1. When it is cordial and strong, as all God's desires are, as it was formerly proved; and 2. When men have opportunity to act for the obtaining of the thing desired, which God always hath; 3. And lastly, when their acting for the obtaining of the thing desired, is not like to hinder them from obtaining another thing more desirable than that, a case never incident unto God in respect of anything desired by him, as hath also lately been shown; it being, I say, in this case, and under these circumstances, an essential property of desire in men to engage them unto action for the obtaining of the thing desired. Because, whensoever men act, or endeavour themselves in any kind to bring a thing to pass, they are always presumed to desire the thing, or the coming of it to pass; therefore, God also, according to Scripture dialect and phrase, may be said to desire whatsoever he any ways interposeth himself or giveth means, to bring to pass.

Secondly, there is the same consideration and ground also of purposes and intentions attributed unto him. He is therefore said, to purpose and intend such and such things, because his goodness, wisdom, and power, *i. e.* the infinite perfection of his nature, which eminently containeth all these, enableth and induceth him to act for or towards the attainment of them, after such a kind of manner and upon such terms, according to which men, I mean sober and well-advised men, are wont to act and

engage themselves for the assecution of such things which they purpose and intend. How, and upon what terms such men are wont to act in order to the obtaining of things properly purposed and intended by them, and not absolutely decreed, was lately declared, viz. so far, and to such a degree of engagement as they judge convenient and meet, consideration being had of the value, worth, and consequence of the things purposed and intended by them in case they be obtained. Therefore, to conclude God's non-intendments from his non-attainments, is a reasoning of no value, and supposeth a non-difference between his purposes or intentions and decrees; between which, notwithstanding, as hath been shown, there is a very emphatical and signal difference. The reason why God engageth not himself to the actual assecution of all things purposed and intended by him shall, God willing, be argued in due time and place.

Thirdly and lastly, God is also said to decree such and such things, because the infinite perfection of his nature and being inclineth him to act and engage himself for the effecting of them, after such a manner and upon such terms, as men are wont to engage themselves for the actual performance and bringing to pass of what they decree. What this manner and what these terms are, we have already shown. What men properly determine or decree, they engage to the uttermost of their might to put in execution and perform, if no lower rate of engagement will do the deed. In like manner God is, and well may be, said to decree such things, the execution and effecting whereof he suspendeth upon no condition or consideration whatsoever, one or more ; but declareth himself as one resolved to give being unto them in their respective seasons, whatsoever angels, men, devils, or any other creature shall either do or not do. In this sense, and upon this ground, he may be said to have decreed that all men once shall die; that all men shall be raised from the dead; that men, dying in the Lord, or in the faith of Jesus Christ, shall be everlastingly blessed; that men dying in their sins, or in unbelief, shall be eternally accursed, to omit other particulars without end of like consideration. Only I desire to remind the reader of this, that though we have in our present discourse exactly differenced purposes or intentions from decrees, according to the strict importance of the words, and precise notion of the things themselves, yet may not this difference be always so observed, either by other writers or by the Scriptures themselves, but that the terms may be sometimes put indifferently the one for the other; yea, and the things

themselves be expressed and held forth by such words and phrases of speech, which will equally admit of either signification; yet as to the Scriptures, hardly, I presume, can any instance be found where either the context or the subject matter in hand will not clearly determine the case, I mean, whether it be a purpose or a decree, according to the regular notion of either, as they have been distinguished, which the Holy Ghost there intends.

Before we pass from the subject in hand, it will not be amiss, I suppose, to take a more perfect knowledge of what was intimated before, viz. That all the four particulars, desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees; yea, and more than these, in their respective attributions unto God, are frequently in Scripture expressed by *the will* of God. John 5:21, Christ is said to quicken whom he will, *i. e.* whom he desireth, or intendeth to quicken. See also John 6:88; 17:24. Whereas it is said, John 6:39, “And this is the Father’s *will* that hath sent me,” &c.; and again, ver. 40, “And this is the *will* of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;” evident it is, that the decree, or decreeing *will* of God is meant. See also Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, and elsewhere. The Apostle Paul speaking thus of God, “who *will* have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” 1 Tim. 2:4, and Peter, that he is “willing that all should come to repentance,” 2 Pet. 3:9; speak plainly not of God’s decreeing *will*, but of his purposing or desiring *will*. But of these Scriptures more hereafter. Other significations of this word will, when attributed unto or spoken of God, which are divers, besides those specified upon the present occasion, we shall not now insist upon.

For a close to this chapter, let us, from the grounds pre-asserted herein, take into consideration the difference between the knowledge, or foreknowledge of God, and the intentions, or decrees of God. Therefore (not to repeat, but to build upon premised principles and discussions) first, as the knowledge and foreknowledge of God are differenced by their objects, the object of his knowledge being far more large and comprehensive than the object of his foreknowledge, the one extending to all things whatsoever, past, present, and to come, yea, to all possibilities of things; the other, only to things that are future and yet to come ; so, likewise, both the knowledge and foreknowledge of God, taken together, are plainly distinguished from his intentions and decrees, by the greater

latitude and extent of their object; yea, the object of the foreknowledge of God, which, as hath been said, is far narrower than, the object of his knowledge, is yet far larger and more comprehensive than the object either of his intentions or decrees. The object of his decrees extendeth only to such things, which, as was formerly argued, himself purposeth to effect, or give being unto, without any exceptions or provisoes concerning any possible interventions whatsoever. The object of his intentions or purposes, extendeth to such, things only which he desireth and intendeth to give being also unto, but with condition and limitation, so that the utmost border and extent of the respective objects of the purposes and decrees of God, reacheth but unto such things only, about the production and procurement whereof himself intends operativeness and positiveness of action, or efficiency: whereas the limit of the object of his foreknowledge extendeth unto all things whatsoever that are future, and taketh in, as well such things which his soul abhorreth, and therefore will not lift up his hand unto, I mean the sinful actions of the creature, as those which himself intendeth to call and bring into being.

If you demand a reason why I make this difference between the object of the knowledge and foreknowledge of God on the one hand, and the object of his intentions and decrees on the other, extending the one to all things future, without exception; restraining the other to such future things only wherein God himself means to be active; my reason and answer is this, according to fore-laid grounds; men generally do know, and commonly foreknow, many things, for or towards the production or procurement whereof they intend no contribution of aid, strength, or means in any kind, viz., when they are such that their coming to pass, and their not coming to pass, are but of equal and indifferent concernment to them, as knowing how to make the same benefit or use of the one and of the other. Whereas some other things there are, the effecting whereof, or at least the attempting and endeavouring whereof, is of special concernment unto them. Now things of this latter consideration are the object of men's desires, intentions, and decrees, and they purpose to be active about the bringing of them to pass, whereas matters of the former are the object of their knowledge and foreknowledge only; and, haply, of their providence, if as well their coming to pass, as their not coming to pass, be contrivable by them into any matter of benefit or advantage. In like manner the sins, and wicked ways, and actions of men, may be called

the object of the knowledge and foreknowledge, yea, and of the providence of God, as well as his own most just and holy dispensations, because through the infinite perfection of his nature and being he is enabled, 1. To declare or pre-declare as he pleaseth; and 2. Both enabled and actually resolved to dispose and pre-dispose of them to the best advantage for his own glory, as well as if he formally knew or foreknew them: whereas, notwithstanding he neither was, nor is, nor ever intendeth to be, operative in or about the bringing of them to pass, inasmuch as their non-coming to pass would have been of the same consequence unto him for the advancement of his glory, as their coming to pass is or can be. For, doubtless, God is not so poorly or meanly provided in and of himself, for the exaltation of his name and glory, as to stand in need of the dunghill of sin to make a footstool for him whereby to ascend into his throne. If the goodness and righteousness of men be nothing unto God, profit not him, Psal. 16:2; Job 35:3, 7, much less can the sins of men claim part and fellowship in such a business. So then the sins of men, being only known and foreknown by God, and contrivable to his glory, but no ways requisite or necessary hereunto; may well be looked upon as the object (I mean the partial object) of the knowledge and foreknowledge, yea, and of the providence of God, but not of his desires, intentions, or decrees. Whereas his own dispensations, with their natural and proper fruits and consequents, being intrinsically, and with a direct tendency, of sovereign and high concernment for his glory, may safely, and with the best consistency of reason and truth, be looked upon as the object, not of his knowledge or foreknowledge only, but of his desires, intentions, and decrees also.



## CHAPTER 4.

**Concerning the perfection of God, in his nature and being, and some things clearly deducible from it; particularly his simplicity, actuality, and goodness in decrees.**

“AND this is life eternal, that they,” or that men, “know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ,” saith the Lord Christ himself in that most solemn supplicatory address unto his Father, recorded John 17:3, yet not for his Father’s instruction, but his children’s. What knowledge of himself it is, either for kind, quality, or degree, which Jesus Christ here joineth with the knowledge of God, as, together with it, constituting and making up one entire cause or means of salvation unto the creature; or with what kind of necessity he supposeth the conjunction of that knowledge of himself, which he intendeth, with the knowledge of God, to be necessary to that great end and purpose, as whether with an absolute, or an expediential and accumulative necessity only, we shall not for the present inquire, much less determine. This, I presume, will be granted upon demand only, without proof; that as the true knowledge of Christ doth necessarily include, or pre-suppose the like knowledge of God; so doth such a knowledge of God as our Saviour here describes, the knowing of him to be the only true God, comprehend in it an implicit or virtual knowledge of Christ also. This might be brought into a clear light by the helping hand of the Scriptures, but that the contemplation of it is a little eccentric to our present design. However, let those who doubt consult these oracles, with their fellows, John 14:1; John 5:23; Psal. 9:10; Jer. 9:23, 24; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:19—21; besides many others.

But what is it to know God, or God the Father, GREEK, “the only true God?” First, to know God, or the Father, the only true God, may admit of a double construction, or meaning: either, 1. As if the truth of this proposition, God, or God the Father, is the only true God, were the terminus, or intended object of the knowledge here spoken of; or, 2. As if God the Father’s being the only true God were presupposed to this knowledge, and some further particulars concerning him the object hereof. The former sense hath both most men, and doubtless most reason also to plead for it. For when God is perfectly known to be the only true

God, there is very little or nothing more left to be known concerning him. Therefore, secondly, To know God, or God the Father, the only or the alone true God, is I conceive, "To know (viz. upon substantial and demonstrative grounds) that his nature or being every way answers the true and regular notion of a God, *i.e.* that he is infinitely gracious, infinitely wise, infinitely just, infinitely powerful, infinitely blessed, infinite in all manner of excellency and perfection, and all this in the most absolute simplicity of essence, without any plurality, multiplication, or composition in what kind, or of what things soever; and, on the other hand, that there is nothing in him, in one kind or other, in one consideration or other, which reason duly informed, and judging like itself, can think unmeet or unworthy to be found in a true God. This is to know God, or God the Father, to be a true God. 2. To know him to be the only true God, implies further a like knowledge that there is no other nature or being whatsoever but his, or that wherein he partakes, that in excellency or perfection in any kind is equal unto his, or either formally or virtually the same with his. That God is perfect, is one of the philosophers' of those common impressions of light, or inbred principles of reason, wherewith nature (in their language) or God himself (in the dialect of Christians) upon the account of Christ's merit and mediation (in which respect it is attributed unto him also,) "Enlighteneth every man that cometh" (or, as he cometh, or coming) "into the world," John i. 9. The united light of which principles, or impressions, is said, ver. 4, to be that "life of men," *i. e.* the means of that life of men, or the means whereby men were to attain that life, which is there said to have "been in Christ," viz. as in a fountain of merit, or as in a designed purchaser, for them. For the meaning of the latter clause of this verse, GREEK, which our English rendereth, "and the life was the light of men," is, I conceive with submission, this, or to this effect, viz. that that life and salvation which Christ, in reality of design, and with semblable acceptance in the sight of God, had from the beginning purchased by his death for men, did, or doth as it were in the first break or dawning of it, appear and discover itself in those principles of natural light, reason, judgment, conscience, understanding, &c., which are found in the generality of men upon their "coming into the world;" these being granted and given unto them by God for that great and blessed end and purpose, viz. that by them they might be made capable of attaining that life and salvation,

which was procured and purchased for them by Christ, and intended to be really conferred upon them, upon their believing and continuance therein unto the end : though it is true, that men generally as they grow up in the world, convert these principles of light and understanding to other uses, and not to those for which they are given them, as viz. to “make provision for the flesh for the fulfilling of the lusts thereof,” and not to the obtaining of that life and happiness which is in Christ for them; as foolish children, which fall to play, or quarrel amongst themselves, by the opportunity of that candle which their parents allow them for their studies and books. Yea, men generally do not only misspend those talents of light we speak of, about the impertinencies of this present world, hut partly through an unmanlike oscitancy and inconsiderateness, partly out of an inordinate propensity to comport with the world without any fear or sense of danger hereby, suffer their judgments and understandings to be corrupted, adulterated, imbased and abused by many false and foolish principles and notions, which turn them quite aside from a regular and due prosecution of that life and salvation which is in Christ for them, and might have been obtained by them; yea, and subject them to a sad incapacity of the things of their peace, when they are proposed with the greatest evidence and power unto them. Insomuch that though the life which was in Christ is said to be “ the light of men,” yet it immediately followeth, that “ the light shineth in darkness,” (i. e. the doctrine of life and salvation is clearly preached to an ignorant world,) “ and the darkness comprehended it not,” i. e. that ignorance, or incapacity rather, of the things of eternal life, which men have voluntarily contracted and brought upon themselves, is so exceeding great and strange, that they understand little or nothing of this doctrine so preached unto them. But this occasionally only, and by the way. As to the work in hand, doubtless there was never any man touched with any competent sense, or enlightened with any tolerable notion of a deity, that ever put it to the question in himself, whether God was perfect or no. “All men,” saith Aristotle, in his Metaphysics, “ without any demur or delay, ascribe that unto God which they conceive to be most perfect.” And indeed that very sense and notion of God which nature prompted! her children with, though many of them are dull of hearing in this kind, doth not admit of any tiling looked upon as defective or imperfect within the verge of it.

Therefore having so firm, and so generally-approved a foundation to

build upon, as the perfection of God, let us see what it affordeth unto us by way of evident deduction, toward the advancement of our great design, the magnifying of God in his gracious intendments of salvation unto all men, without exception, in or by the death of Christ.

First, if the nature, essence, and being of God be most perfect, then must it needs be most simple, most entirely, absolutely, and perfectly one, not admitting any plurality or composition whatsoever. The reason of this is plain, because all plurality and composition, whether of parts or of natures, suppose imperfection. For if any one of these parts or natures were perfect, absolutely or infinitely perfect, it were able to do whatsoever is necessary, yea, or possible to be done, (for without this there is no simple or absolute perfection,) and then what need were there of anything more to be added unto it, or joined with it ? That a man hath ears as well as eyes, and eyes as well as ears; and so, hands as well as feet, and feet as well as hands, clearly proves, that no one of these members is simply and absolutely perfect, *i. e.* can do or perform, and this with a like comeliness and conveniency, whatsoever is necessary to be done and performed by man; for then all the rest should be superfluous. They may all be perfect in their kind, *i. e.*, with a determinate and limited perfection, and in order to such or such a particular action and service, and yet one stand in need of another, as the apostle speaketh; but if any one of them were simply and absolutely perfect, *i. e.*, could do all things whatsoever upon the same terms of convenience which both itself and all the rest can do together, certainly all the rest were needless. So if an angel could understand by his mere essence or substance of his nature, without any endowment or gift of understanding distinct therefrom; or could perform any other action, or do any execution immediately by his essence, without the intervening of those natural endowments or qualities of strength, power, activeness, &c., all these endowments and appendices to his nature and essence would be merely superfluous. The necessity which the angels have of wisdom, knowledge, reason, strength, &c., over and besides their mere essences and beings, plainly declareth and sheweth these essences and beings of theirs to be imperfect, (I mean in respect of a simple and absolute perfection,) and that they stand in need of such additional properties and endowments, as we speak of, to make them perfect even in their own kind. Nor is it indeed possible for God to make any such creature, or to speak somewhat more properly, no

such creature can possibly be made, which shall be able to act or work immediately by its essence, or otherwise than by the mediation of some virtue, property, or quality, in one kind or other, inherent therein; it being the glorious and incommunicable property and prerogative of the Divine essence or Being itself so to work. So then this absolute and infinite simplicity of the nature of God supposed, as without which he cannot be absolutely and infinitely perfect, it plainly followeth,

First, That all those attributes of God, commonly so called, as wisdom, knowledge, justice, mercy, goodness, power, &c. ; and so all those passions and affections, as of anger, grief, repentance, love, hatred, &c.; and again, all those parts or members, as eyes, ears, hands, feet, mouth, &c., which are so frequently attributed unto him in the Scriptures, are all one and the same thing in God, though they be very different things in men; nor is any one of them, nor all of them together, any other thing but only his single, simple, and pure essence. But therefore all this variety and diversity, both of attributes, affections, and parts, is attributed unto him, because by means of this one simple and single essence being infinitely perfect, he can, when he pleaseth, and pleaseth, when he judgeth meet, give forth himself, and act all that variety and diversity of action which these different principles are wont to produce in men. As for example; a man that hath wisdom is able to act, and doth act when he pleaseth, in a regular proportion, or due order unto his ends. So a man that hath knowledge, whether of things past, present, or to come, being wise withal, manageth and disposeth his affairs according to the exigency of such knowledge, and with the best advantage that such knowledge affords unto him. A man that is just, doth things that are just and equal; and so he that is angry, frowns, threatens, or strikes. He that loves, doth good unto and kindly by those who are loved of him; he that hates, acts to the prejudice or hurt of the person hated when he hath opportunity; and so in the rest. Now because God, out of the infinite perfection of his nature, though it be, as hath been said, most singly and simply one, is yet able to act, and doth act, when he pleaseth, all this variety of action, acts as wise men act, as men that have knowledge of things act, as men that are angry, as men that love, as men that hate, are wont to act, &c. Therefore all these principles of action, as wisdom, knowledge, anger, love, hatred, &c., are by the Holy Ghost ascribed unto him. Suppose there were in physic such a simple, as, for example, an herb, root, drug,

mineral, or the like, which had such a precious or sovereign virtue in it, that the use of it were a certain cure of all diseases, as gout, stone, fever, apoplexy, &c.; and further, that there were particular medicines or receipts besides appropriated to every disease respectively, and were all of them sufficient to cure their appropriated diseases; in this case that simple we speak of, might be said to have the several virtues of all those other medicines or receipts in it, because it is able to do alone as much and as many things, in a medicinal way, as all those taken together; yet can it not be said to have the virtue of any one of them in the specific or formal nature of it, but only eminently, *i. e.*, in respect of that sovereign property, which, though it be simply and formally but one, yet answereth in value, worth, and variety of operation, unto all the several virtues, and healing properties in all those other receipts. In like manner, all that great variety of faculties, powers, properties, virtues, endowments, excellencies, and all principles of action whatsoever, that are scattered in their proper and distinct natures amongst the creatures, may be attributed unto God, though not so much as any one of them be properly and formally in him, *viz.*, because there is that sovereign and supertranscendent perfection in his nature, being but simply and most singly one, which for power and variety of action in every kind, answereth them all, yea, and far exceedeth them also.

Secondly, From the simplicity of the nature of God, as it hath been argued and explained, it clearly followeth, that love and hatred, and so mercy and justice or severity in God towards his creature, do not argue any different affection or inclination in him towards it, (the simplicity of his nature not admitting of any such difference,) but only a different dispensation, answerable to the different effects or expressions of such principles in men. So that there is no inconvenience nor untruth in it at all, to affirm that God at one and the same time, may both hate and love, and so again, love and hate the same person, *viz.*, in respect of several dispensations of a contrary nature and import. As, for example, when he severely punisheth a godly person for some sin or sins committed, and yet withal continues such a measure of his grace or good Spirit unto him, whereby he is enabled still to believe in God and to love him, his sore affliction notwithstanding; in respect of this latter dispensation, God may be said to love; and in respect of the former, to hate him.

If it be demanded; but can God in any sense be said to hate a person

that is godly? I answer, that hatred in God, importing not matter of affection, but of dispensation only, agreeable to the effects of hatred in men, to deny that God can in any sense be said, to hate a godly person, is to deny that he can punish him for sin, or act to the prejudice of his comfort and peace in any kind, howsoever he provoketh him.

If it be yet said; But the Scripture will not justify or warrant any such assertion as this, that God hateth a godly person. I answer,

1. By concession, that the Scripture doth not indeed, to my best remembrance, justify or warrant such a saying, by way of example or sameness of expression. But,

2. By way of exception, I answer, that the Scripture warranteth many things by way of reason or ground, which it doth not warrant either by example, precept, or otherwise than by ground, as is famously known in the case of infant baptism, and of women's admission to the Lord's table. Now wherever either the perfection or simplicity of God is asserted in the Scriptures, whether expressly, or by way of consequence, as both the one and the other frequently are, there is a sufficient ground laid to warrant both truth and also aptness enough of expression in such a saying as this, that God may be said both to love and to hate the same person ; yea, and both these at one and the same time, as hath been sufficiently explained.

Thirdly and lastly, from the simplicity of the nature of God, the truth of that common maxim in divinity, *quicquid est in Deo, Deus est, i. e.,* whatsoever is in God, is God, is fully demonstrable: and consequently that neither from eternity was there anything, neither for the present is there anything, nor ever shall be anything in him to eternity, inferior to himself, anything which is not God. And if so, then both the justification of men from eternity, and so the condemnation of men from eternity, are but idle fancies, with which some men, partly through weakness, partly through inconsiderateness, commit spiritual fornication. Yea, though I will not say that any of the persons who hold either of these opinions do blaspheme, yet the opinions themselves, narrowly examined, will not be found innocent from this great offence : inasmuch as both the one and the other do apparently give the honour of the glorious God in his incommunicable attribute of eternity, a parte ante, as divines call it, to weak and contemptible creatures, men : they make these co-eternal with God, and to subsist from eternity. For that which is not can neither be justified nor condemned.

If it be demanded, in favour of these opinions, but had not men some kind of being or subsistence from eternity? were they not in the mind of God, and present with him, after some such manner as the idea or model of a house is in the mind of the architect, before there be so much as a stone of it laid ?

To this I answer, according to the tenor of what hath been lately argued and proved concerning the simplicity of the Divine essence, that if they had any being from eternity, it could be none other than the Divine Being itself; for there were no plurality of beings from eternity. All beings without beginnings may be numbered, by the figure of one, and this unmultiplied. Therefore, if God justified any from eternity, it must be himself; if he condemned or reprobated any from eternity, it must be himself likewise. Nor can men be said to have been in the mind of God from eternity after any such manner as the idea or platform of a house is in the mind of the artificer, before he begins to build; because such an idea is no part of the artificer, nor yet of his mind, but is clearly separable from both; whereas there was nothing in God from eternity but his own essence, and that which is altogether inseparable from him. Or, if it should be granted that men were in God, or in the mind of God, from eternity, lifter such a manner as is contended for, yet could it not be said that men, men themselves, *i. e.* those creatures which consist of bodies and souls, and have sinned on earth, were either justified or condemned from eternity, but only their ideas or representations in the mind of God. Yet how, or in what sense or notion, these should be said to be either justified or condemned, whenas they never sinned, nor are capable of sinning, is out of the reach of my understanding to conceive. If it be yet further demanded, But were not men (and all things besides) in some consideration or sense in God from eternity; and may it not be said, that in this sense, whatever it be, they were some justified and some condemned? I answer,

1. By concession, that men, and all things besides, were in God from eternity *tanquam in fonte, seu radice, vel causa productiva.*, *i. e.*, as in the fountain, root, or productive cause of their respective beings. There is nothing capable of receiving an existence, or actual being, but what had a potential or seminal being in some productive cause or other, one or more, before. Therefore, if this universe, with all the parts and members of it, had not been in God, as in the productive cause, doubtless they had



never been produced, or received being. But

2. I answer further, by way of exception, that men, considered in that being which they had in God from eternity, were no ways capable either of justification, or of condemnation, or of any such difference or distinction between them, as these two acts or conditions infer. For as God himself, the common root or producent cause of all men, was one, singly, simply, and most undividedly one from eternity, so were all men singly and simply one in him; all alike holy, all alike innocent, and free from sin; and consequently all alike beloved of him, all being yet nothing but himself. It cannot be said of the roses, which in the winter time were virtually and seminally in one and the same root, that some of them flourished and prospered, and others were blasted or eaten up with worms, whilst they were together in the root; though, afterwards, when they come to receive actual production, and to subsist extra causas, respectively, this, difference may very possibly befall them.

Yea, but were not some men justified, and others condemned, in the counsel, purpose, and decree of God, from eternity? I answer:

If the meaning of the question be only this, whether God, from eternity, did not purpose or decree to justify some men, and condemn others, that God from eternity did purpose and decree to justify in time all those who should in time believe; and to condemn all those who, living to years of discretion, should die in their unbelief; yet these decrees, though in their respective executions they make a great difference indeed between persons and persons, yet in their making or enacting by God, they made none at all. This decree of God, whosoever believeth shall he justified, doth neither make, nor suppose, any one man any whit nearer, either to believing, or to justification than another: nor, on the other hand, doth this decree, he that believes not, shall be condemned, either make or suppose one man nearer, either to unbelief, or condemnation through unbelief, than another. A law that is made for the punishing of murder, or adultery, with death, relates no more, in the intention of the law-makers, at the time of the making or enacting of it, to one man than to another, *i. e.* they intended no more the punishment or death of one man than of another, (personally considered); much less did they intend to make any man, or to permit any man to become a murderer or adulterer by the enacting of such a law, but the contrary; yet this law, when it comes to be put in execution for the crimes made punishable by it, and voluntarily

committed by men, makes as great a difference between men and men (and somewhat greater) as is between the living and the dead.

If the meaning of the question last propounded be, whether God did not from eternity decree the justification of such and such particular men by name, and so the condemnation of others after the same manner; I answer that, doubtless, he did from eternity decree equivalently, though not formally, the justification of all those particular persons by name who in time come to be justified; and so again, the condemnation of all those by name who in time come to be condemned. My meaning is, that no particular person, whatsoever his name he, who comes to be justified, but his justification flows from that decree of God from eternity, wherein he decreed to justify all those by their names who should believe. For had not God made such a decree as this, and make it he must from eternity if he made it at all, certainly no man could ever be justified upon such terms. In like manner, God from eternity decreed the condemnation of all such particular persons, whatever their names he, who living to maturity of years should die in unbelief. In this sense and consideration, and in this only, as far as yet I apprehend, God may be said to have decreed both the justification and the condemnation of particular men and women from eternity, viz. because he made two such decrees from eternity; by the one of which, all particular persons come to be justified who ever are justified; and by the other, all particular persons to be condemned who are condemned. But we shall have opportunity to argue the unsoundness of both the opinions, especially of the latter, upon other grounds; in reference whereunto, we supersede any further inquiry into them for the present.

Secondly, If God in his nature or essence be simply, absolutely, and infinitely perfect, then must he needs be a most pure and simple act, without any potentiality at all; *i. e.* he must needs be actually, *et de praesenti*, as they say, and so have been from eternity, whatsoever he is capable of being, or whatsoever it is possible for him ever to be. The reason of this is, because all potentiality or possibility of being anything more, or anything besides what a person, or thing is, for the present argueth imperfection, which is clearly proved thus: whatsoever it is possible for a person or thing to be, which at present he is not, must needs be something which will either add unto his being and make it better, or else take away from his being and so make it worse; or else he a

thing merely indifferent, and so of no concernment unto him at all. So then, if a man be capable of being anything which yet he is not, for the bettering of his condition, it is a clear case that his present condition or being is imperfect, for he is as yet destitute of that which should add perfection unto him. If he be capable of anything, or of being anything, which yet he is not, to the making of his present condition worse, here the case is yet more clear that such a man's condition is not perfect. For to be obnoxious to the deprivation or losing of any good, which a man enjoyeth for the present, manifestly argueth weakness and imperfection. Thirdly, and lastly, If a man be capable of being anything which yet he is not, suppose it be without any relation at all to his condition, either for the better or the worse, yet this also plainly argueth imperfection. For it supposeth that a man hath something, hath a capacity, which is a mere superfluity to him, and doth him no good, yea, which he knoweth not how to improve for his good.; and this, as apparently as either of the former, argueth imperfection. So that certain it is, that if the nature and being of God be absolutely and infinitely perfect, he must needs be a pure and mere act, all in present and actual being, whatsoever it is possible for him ever to be.

This most entire and complete actuality of the divine nature and being is, I presume, generally subscribed by all reformed divines. "God," saith Zanchie, "is a most pure and most simple act, and no ways capable or in any possibility of being anything, more or less, than what he is." And from this actuality of God, he infers both his absolute immutability and infinity of his perfection. "It is affirmed," saith Peter Martyr, "as with one mouth, of all that are godly, that God is not changed, inasmuch as this would be a certain sign as well of imperfection as inconstancy in him." The reason why God is not changed, nor capable of any change whatsoever, is because he is a most pure, absolute, and complete act, *i. e.* he is for the present whatsoever it is possible in any respect for him to be; so that, notwithstanding his omnipotency itself, He hath no power to make the least alteration or change in himself, either in nature, will, or action. Upon the account of this author's credit, who interesteth all the godly in the assertion and belief of God's unchangeableness, and, consequently, of that perfect actuality which we assert, I judge it needless to make any further levy of testimonies in this behalf.

Only, I conceive, it may be worthy our pains to vindicate this doctrine

of the actuality of God from the incumbrance of an objection or two. First. If God be so pure, mere, and perfect an act, that no mutation in any kind is incident unto him, how can He be said to act or do anything to-day which He did not yesterday or before, yea from eternity ? As for example, to give faith unto a person or make him a believer to-day, who was an unbeliever yesterday? Or doth God work no more, no otherwise in or upon a man when he is made an actual believer, than he did whilst he was yet an unbeliever? And if God changeth his action or manner of action, or acteth at all where he acted not before, is he not someways mutable, and consequently no such pure or complete act as hath been asserted ?

I answer : 1. What mutations, changes, or differences soever be at any time found in men or in other creatures, whether in their natures, qualities, motions, actions, or in what respect soever, most certain it is that God is uniformly and unchangeably the same, both in his nature, or essence, properties and actings. “God,” saith Peter Martyr, “defers his assistances as seemeth good unto Him, and moves the hearts of men at a certain time, whereas he moved them not before; which, notwithstanding, we question not but He doth without any change of himself.” The essence or being of God being altogether unchangeable, and his operations or actings being really and formally the same with His essence, impossible it is that the one should be more changeable than the other. Therefore,

2. When a man believeth to-day, who believed not yesterday, or before, though God now inclines and moveth his heart to believe, which he did not before, yet he doth it not by any new act, or exertion of himself, but by that first great eternal act of his, “*quo totum Ens, et omnes ejus differentias profudit*,” as Aquinas speaks, *i.e.* by which he poured out, as it were, from himself at once, the whole and entire body of entity or being, with all and all manner the differences of it. For we are not to conceive, that upon the multiplication or new production of entities or beings, the acts of God are multiplied, for or in their production; but that whatsoever is produced by him, or receives being from him, as all things that have being do, when, or at what time soever they receive this being, they receive it by virtue of that one creative act of his, by which at once, in the beginning, as the Scripture phrase is, he gave being to all things, past, present, and yet to come. Nor are we to conceive, that when Moses reporteth the history of the creation, thus, “And God said, Let there be

light," Gen. 1:3; and afterwards, viz. after a day's space, that he said, " Let there be a firmament," Gen. 1:6 ; and again, after the same distance of time, " Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place," &c. Gen. 1:9, that he spake these things at three several distinct times, or that he waited the just space of a day between speech and speech; but that Moses' intent, in this description or relation, was to declare, by what successive spaces or distances of time, that one creative word of God which he spake at once, took place, and gave being to the several and respective parts of the universe. So that, for example, when, by way of preface to the second day's work, he writeth thus: "And God said, Let there be a firmament," &c., his meaning only was, to signify what that one creative word of God, once and at once spoken, did produce, or give being unto, towards the completing of the universe, the second day after the creation was begun; not that God rested, or kept silence for a day's space, and then fell to work again. This truth, I mean, that all temporary and successive effects in the world, whether produced by the intervening and concourse of second causes, or without, are produced by the impression and vigour of that one great act of God we speak of, and not by any new act, exercised or exerted by him, in order to their several and particular productions, is frequently insinuated in the Scriptures themselves: yea, and is demonstrable by ground of reason; and nothing but what hath been the judgment of several learned men, and of Augustine, by name. The context of Moses, Gen. 2:4, tenoureth thus: "These are the generations of the heavens, and of the earth, when they were created; *in the day* that the Lord made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field, *before it was in the earth*, and every herb of the field, *before it grew*" Here he plainly affirmeth, that God created the earth and the heavens in the same day, and every plant of the field, *before* it was in the earth, &c., clearly implying, that though the earth and the heavens received their respective beings on two several days successively, yet that which God acted, or did, towards their productions, was done by him in one and the same day, *i. e.* at once: and again, that although no plant of the field was actually produced, before it was in the earth, (for no plant was made out of the earth, and afterwards by God put into it,) yet that on God's part, and in respect of what he contributed towards their actual production, they were produced before, viz. by that one creative act we spake of. Consonant to this deduction from, as also to the exposition

lately given unto that the context of Moses, is this passage of Augustine, “When thou hearest, all things were then made, when the day was made, conceive, if thou beest able, that six or sevenfold repetition which is made, or to be made, without any intervals, of delays or spaces of time; or if thou beest not able so to conceive of it, leave it for those to conceive who are able; and go thou forward with the Scripture, which forsaketh not thine infirmity, but walketh a mother’s pace slowly with thee; and which so speaketh, that with her height she laughs at the proud; with her depth she amazeth the considerate; with her truth, she feeds the strong or well grown; and with her affability nourisheth little ones.” The same author, elsewhere: “For God,” saith he, “made all time with all corporeal creatures, together or at once: which visible creatures are signified by the name of heaven ‘and earth.” This, to have been his positive and clear judgment, many other passages in his writings give plenary and pregnant testimony: and more particularly his 105th tractate upon John, and his books upon Genesis. But to return to the Scriptures. Those words, Psa. 115:3: “He,” God, “hath done whatsoever he pleased,” in the best sense and interpretation of them, and that which is closest to the letter, are thus to be understood, viz. that whatsoever God willeth or hath willed, should at any time come to pass, he hath already done; viz. all that he meaneth, or which is any ways necessary for him to do, towards the effecting of it. In this sense, also, that of the apostle, Rom. 8:30, with many other places of Scripture of like phrase and consideration, is to be understood. “Moreover, whom he hath predestinated, them also hath he called: and whom he hath called, them hath he also justified; and whom he hath justified, them hath he also glorified.” God is said to have, already, called, justified, glorified, all those whom he did foreknow, (ver. 29,) *i. e.* preapprove, (viz. as lovers of God, ver. 28,) and so predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, because he hath already done whatsoever is requisite for him to do, for the procurement and effecting of them in due time.

By the way, lest the table of this doctrine should prove a snare of error or mistake unto any, four things are diligently to be minded. First, that that one great act of God, by which he gave being, in time, unto the world, and unto all things that either have been or ever shall be produced or done in it, was not exercised or acted by him in time, hut from or in eternity. The reason hereof is, because being really and formally one and

the same thing with his essence and being, as learned men generally acknowledge, it could not be of any later or other edition than so. Secondly, that this act, though acted or put forth by him from eternity, is not, therefore, to be conceived as an act that is passed, or finished long since, but as permanent, and continued in him or by him, yet without any succession or continuity of time, according to that of our Saviour, “My Father *worketh hitherto*, and I work,” John 5:17. There is nothing perishable or changeable in God: what he worketh once he worketh always, though the products or effects of his working alter and change, rise and fall. The late learned Bishop Davenant asserteth these propositions as true, in the opinion of all divines: 1. That God can will nothing in time. If so, then that will of his, by which the world was at first created, and by which all things are in continuance and succession of time produced, must needs be from or in eternity. 2. That God cannot but have that will which he hath. If so, then that will, by which he created the world, and gave being unto all things that were to receive being in time, is unchangeably permanent in him. 3. And, lastly, That God cannot have any will which for the present he hath not. If so, then that will of his, by which he operateth or worketh faith in Peter, in time, as for instance to-day, was in him from eternity; and, consequently, God wrought as much towards the making of Peter a believer, before he did believe, as he did when he was actually brought to believe.

A third thing to be considered for a right understanding of the point in hand is, that that act of God we speak of, though from eternity, and the effects or productions of it in time, yet is it not to be conceived as precedaneous in time to these effects or productions themselves. Though God, for example, willed that will from eternity which was efficacious to make Peter a believer in time, yet is not the act of this will in God to be looked upon or conceived as preceding in time that act of Peter’s will by which he became or was made a believer. The reason hereof is, because there is no succession, nothing sooner, nothing later, nothing before, nothing after other in order of time, in eternity, nor yet in those things which are measured by eternity, as by their proper and adequate measure, as all the acts of God are. This is the constant and known doctrine of the ablest and best divines, as well modern as more ancient. The priority or precedency which the act of God hath before the act of Peter, by the mutual coincidence or joint

concurrence whereof Peter is made a believer, is only a priority in worth, dignity, excellency, eminency, &c., not in time. God doth not will the conversion of Peter before he is converted, nor the glorification of Peter before he be glorified, though he willed, or rather willeth, both the one and the other from eternity. The reason of the seeming strangeness of these things to our apprehensions is, our ignorance and unacquaintedness with the nature of eternity, which being nothing else hut God himself, considered as his own measure, in point of duration, and in this respect exceeding difficult to be rightly and fully apprehended and conceived by us; men in the mean time being generally averse from intense and deep speculations, it is no great marvel if it seems a kind of uncouth mystery unto them. But that which we here affirm, viz., that that act or operation of God by which Peter is made an actual believer, though it were in God, and put forth by him from eternity, yet was not in order of time before that act of Peter himself whereby he believed, but only in a kind of transcendent excellency or dignity, proper to eternity, is nothing but the avouched doctrine of many learned and judicious men; yea, and clearly follows from the very nature of eternity, as it is generally defined and described by our reformed divines themselves, yea, even those that are esteemed most orthodox. “But if,” saith Austin, speaking unto God, “there was no time before heaven and earth, why do men ask, What didst thou *then*?” meaning, before heaven and earth were made, “for there was no *then* where there was no time. Neither dost thou precede times in time; for, if so, thou couldst not precede” or be before “all times. But thou predest all times that are past with the stateliness” or transcendent height “of thine eternity, which is always present; and art above all times that are future, because they are yet to come ; and when they are come, they will be past, ‘ but thou art the same, and thy years fail not.’ ” Consonant hereunto is the saying of Boetius, a philosopher: “Nor ought God,” saith he, “to be conceived by us more ancient than his creatures in respect of any quantity of time, but rather in respect of the propriety of his simple nature.” Fr. Arriba, a late writer, and acute, thoroughly versed in the learning of the fathers and schoolmen, hath notably cleared this point, and fully answered all objections which, as far as I am able to apprehend, can be brought against it. I shall present the reader with two or three passages from him relating unto it. “When the holy Scripture,” saith he, “and our school- doctors with it, say and teach that things which



are eternal are before things made in time, they speak truly not of a priority *formally* so called, such as that is which is found in those things unto which the consideration of what is before and what is after doth belong, which I have often said cannot agree to eternity, but they speak of a kind of *eminential* priority, in respect of which those things which never fail, but are always the same indefinitely, are truly said to be before things that are temporal,” or in time, “not indeed formally, but eminently: for speaking properly of this eminential priority, or of an eternal permanency, that which is indefinitely,” *i. e.* without end or ceasing, “is before that which sometimes is and sometimes is not.” In another place he expresseth himself thus: “Our former doctrine supposed, it manifestly follows from thence that those words of Christ, John 8:58, ‘Before Abraham was, I am,’ and that of Paul, Eph. 1:4, ‘He chose us in him before the world was made,’ with many other like places of Scripture, everywhere obvious, are to be taken according to the manner of our understandings, as meant of this eminential priority, not of an antecendency in respect of time, not of any priority properly and formally so called.” The same author elsewhere hath these words: “Inasmuch as the proper and formal reason,” or nature, “of mutability, wherein the ratio” or nature “of time consisteth, is intrinsical” or essential “unto time and to the differences of it, as past, present, and to come, and consequently imperfection must needs be intrinsical to them also,” (mutability always including imperfection,) “evident it is that fruit and *erit*, was and will be, whereby that which is past and that which is to come are signified, cannot” with truth, “formally or properly be attributed unto God.” This, then, is the third thing to be diligently considered, to prevent all misprision about the point in hand: no act of God is before any act of the creature in respect of time. The fourth, and last thing of like necessity to be considered for the same end is this: No act of God, nor co-operation of his with his creature, imposeth any necessity upon any free-working cause (I mean upon any cause which is free in the nature or constitution of it to work, or not to “work, and to work variously) to act so, or so, determinately; nor yet supposeth any necessity or infallibility of any act or effect producible by such causes, before, or until they be actually produced. Nor is this anything but the received doctrine of orthodox and approved divines. “God,” saith Austin, “so administereth, or governeth all things which he hath created, that he suffereth them to

exercise and act their own proper motions.” This saying of Austin is frequently cited and made use of by our best reformed divines, as P. Martyr, Polanus, and others, in their explications of the providence of God, and the manner of his concurrence with second causes in their motions. Now if God, notwithstanding any influence of his upon, or any co-operation with, his creatures in their motions or actings, yet so far comports with them as to leave them to their native principles, properties, and propensions, in their actings, doubtless, he doth not necessitate, or determine with any strong or irresistible hand, the wills of men in their respective actions or elections; it being the innate and most intrinsical property of these to determine themselves, or make their elections freely. There is every whit as much, if not much more, in this passage of Anselm. “And when,” saith he, “we deny that there ” he means in eternity, “ is anything either past or future, which hath, been, or is to be hereafter, in time, we do not affirm that what hath been, or is to be hereafter, is in no sense or consideration there ; we only say that these things are not there, after the manner, or in the consideration of things, either past or to come, but indesinently and as present, with such a presentiality which is proper to eternity. And in this there appears no contrariety at all. So then, *that may, without any repugnancy or contradiction, be said to be changeable, or alterable in time, before it is, which remains unchangeable and unalterable in eternity*; not before it is, or after it is, but indesinently; because here, viz. in eternity, there is nothing according unto time,” (or any the differences hereof.) The same author, to the same purpose, and in the same tract where the recited passage is extant, writeth thus :—“ For as, although in eternity, there is nothing which was, and is now past; or that shall be hereafter, but only that which is, and yet in time something hath been, and something shall be, without any repugnancy: so may it be proved without any inconvenience, that what cannot be changed or altered in eternity, may yet in time, before the being of it, be changed or altered, by the liberty of the wills of men. Though there be nothing there, in eternity, but what is present; yet presence there is not a presence in time like unto ours, but an eternal presence,” (which neither admits anything past nor to come,) “ in which all times are contained. So that, as the present time comprehends every place, and whatsoever is in any place, so is all time, and all things that are, or are done in time, comprehended and shut up in the present ”

(or now) “ of eternity.” He that speaketh such things as these, clearly supposeth that no act of God whatsoever, how unchangeable, how potent soever, imposeth any necessity upon the wills of men, to act so or so, to will this or that determinately, before they have acted or willed; hut that Judas, for example, notwithstanding any act of predestination in God concerning him, was at as much liberty at the first, whether he would betray his Lord and master or no, as any other of his fellow-apostles, or any other man; yea and that, at any time, before he did betray him, he was, notwithstanding any act of God in suspending or withdrawing his grace from him, at liberty whether he would have proceeded to the actual betraying of him or no ? “The Jews,” saith Gaudentius, an author much more ancient than the former, “ were willing to do the evil which they did. And certainly, had they been unwilling, they had not done it. Doubtless it is no less than high sacrilege so much as once to think that God who is not only good and just, but goodness and justice itself, should either command or constrain that to be done which himself condemneth.” So that, in this author's sense also, the wills of men are left free by God either to will or not to will, things that are sinful. Nor is this contrary to the doctrine of our later and best reformed divines, when they speak like themselves, and drive out of the rut or worn path of common credulity and unmanlike pre-occupation. “For God,” saith Peter Martyr, “indeed draws all things” (along with him,) “but yet he yields or gives way after such a manner, that he troubles or disturbs nothing” (in its course.) “So things, though in respect of their natures they incline indifferently to either side, yet they are by God bowed” (or brought over) “more” (or rather) “unto one.” It is clear from the instance which he immediately subjoins, that he here speaketh of the wills of men; and, consequently, that the import of the passage cited is, that God acts no further, no otherwise towards the determination of the wills of men, but only by swaying, or inclining them more, or rather, to the one side than the other; and consequently leaveth them free not only from all co-action or force, but from all necessitation also in their actions, or elections. For he that is only swayed or bowed more, or rather, to one thing than another, hath, this notwithstanding, a liberty or power left him, whether he will conclusively pitch upon that whereunto or towards which he is swayed and bowed, or no. The mind of the same author in the same discourse is delivered in these words. “God,” saith he, “will alter or change the will of

a man; being evil; he makes use of admonitions, sermons, chastisements; for these are the organs and instruments of the providence of God,” &c. If admonitions, sermons, &c., be the instruments and means which God useth to change the evil hearts and wills of men, certainly he doth not change them by an irresistibleness of power, nor in any way whereby the change is necessitated; because then there could be left no place for any usefulness or serviceableness at all of his instruments in or about the change. Nothing can be instrumental in or about the producing of an action or effect, but only in a way of, and according to, such an efficiency which is proper to the nature of it. Charms and spells written in paper and hung about the neck, are not instrumental in the cures which are wrought by Satan, there being no property or quality in them which holds any proportion of causality with such effects as the cures of diseases are; nor can such cures be truly said to be wrought by them, though, haply, they would not be wrought without them. In like manner, the nature and property of admonitions, exhortations, chastisements, &c., being to persuade or work the hearts of men to a change, contingently only, and not in a way of necessitation, much less of compulsion, impossible it is that these should be instrumental in the hand of God in changing the hearts of men, unless it be supposed that this change is wrought by him contingently, and with a possibility at any time, before it be effected, that it should not be effected; and this not only in respect of his liberty, whether he will go through with the work and effect it or no, but in respect of the liberty of the will itself, whether it will be persuaded to a change or no. But concerning the uselessness of exhortations, &c., in case conversion be wrought by an irresistible or necessitating hand, we shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter. To the point in hand, Polanus, another reformed divine, as orthodox by repute as Mr. Calvin himself, prefixes this title to his fifth thesis in the sixth chapter of his Symphony. “God so worketh by the means of nature, that he worketh nothing contrary to their nature: and therefore the providence of God constraineth not the will of the creature.” The nature of the will is to work, I mean to assent and dissent freely, contingently, and without any necessitation, either from within or from without. Therefore, if God worketh nothing contrary to the nature of the will, the will still consents unto him upon such terms that she is at liberty to dissent, anything that he worketh to procure this consent notwithstanding. Besides, if God

worketh nothing contrary to the nature of second causes, then he must needs, according to the common expression of divines, as with necessary causes, work necessarily, so with contingent causes work contingently. Take the acknowledgment of the same truth from Ursine also, another late writer, no less orthodox than the two former. "The will of man," saith he, "even moved of God, is able not only to resist, but also to assent unto and obey God in his motion, by her own and proper motion; which doing, she doth not only suffer, hut acteth also, and raiseth up, or springs, her own actions; although she hath the power of assenting and obeying from the Holy Ghost." A little after these words lie saith, "For God so moveth men, that yet they are not ravished by force or might, but they move themselves also." No man can more clearly assert the perfect contingency or non-necessity of the actings of the wills of men determinately, under the movings and actings of God, than this author hath done in the words presented. He that saith, "the will moved by God is able not only to resist, but also to obey God in his motion," doubtless meaneth, or supposeth, that the will is able to resist him in or under those very motions, under which, and by means whereof, she is able also to consent unto him and obey him. Besides, saying that the will receives *power* of assenting and obeying from the grace of the Holy Ghost, doth he not plainly imply, that she receives from hence no necessitating impressions unto these actions? A man that is unavoidably carried, or acted in or towards an action, can in no tolerable construction be said to receive power for the performance of this action; inasmuch as the conferring of a power to do that which a man was not able to do before, doth noways infer the taking away of that power, such as it was, which this man had before, not to act. Notwithstanding my sense and judgment in the point is, that the will receives from the grace of the Holy Ghost not only a power of consenting, and obeying God in his gracious movings, but, sensu sano, these actings themselves. But of this hereafter. It is, I suppose, needless, and would be more tedious than difficult, to make the pile of "testimonies from our best and most approved authors, for the confirmation of the truth last asserted, any whit greater. He that is afraid to believe the truth, unless he hath an arm of flesh to encourage him, may find many more quotations from several authors of best acceptance with himself, for his encouragement in this kind, drawn together by me in my late Answer to Mr. Jenkyn, from pp. 67 to pp. 74. But for the truth of this assertion,

hitherto managed, and credited by the authority of men, that no act of God is either destructive to the contingency of, or impositive of any necessity, or infallibility in the event, upon the actions or the wills of men, it hath been in part already, and may in place more convenient in the progress of our present discourse, be further evicted and confirmed by dint of argument and demonstration. In the meantime my request to him, that shall, haply, undertake to answer these discussions, is, that he will not needlessly trouble either himself, his reader, or me with producing the authors lately either named or referenced, or any others, as asserting the contrary to what I have argued and proved from them in other places; for I can more willingly grant than question that they have many inconsistencies, in other parts of their writings, with those things which I quoted for them. So that for any man to quote them in oppositum, is to gain nothing to their cause but what is already granted to their hand; only it may prove the easing of the truth from the burthensomeness of their authority in other points, inasmuch as the speaking of contradictions is a plain confession of our ignorance or doubtfulness, at least, of the truth. We have now done with those four cautions so necessary, as was said, for the keeping our apprehensions and understandings upright under the reception of this great truth, absolutely necessary to be believed for the vindicating and clearing the perfect actuality and immutability of God, viz., that, how, or after what manner soever God acteth, or is interested in the successive and new productions of actions or beings in the world, that which he doth in this kind, he doth it not by any new influx, operation, or exertion of himself but by that one great creative act, wherein he gave out himself from eternity. This opinion, because it may seem strange unto many, yea, and nothing less than a truth, though we have already sufficiently, I trust, established it upon the foundations of the Scriptures, we will further show to have been clearly held and asserted by very judicious and considering men ; and, secondly, add a reason or two for the proof of it.

For the first, no man I presume will deny, that great light of the church and agent for Christ in his days, Austin by name, to have been a judicious, considering, and learned man. How full of the opinion now asserted he was, his writings in many passages declare, I shall insist only upon some few. “So then,” saith he, “day was made in what day God made heaven and earth, and every green thing of the field before they were upon the

earth. Before, seven days were reckoned: here, one day is spoken of, in which day God made heaven and earth, and every green thing of the field and every herb, by the name of which day all time may well be conceived to be signified; for God made all time, with all creatures that should be in time, together, or at once,” &c. If God made all time, and all things that were to be in time together, he must needs make all things by one and the same act. Elsewhere the same author demands, “And how” (or after what manner) “did God say, ‘Let there be light?’ in time, or in the eternity of his word? If in time, it must be mutably” (or with the change of himself): “and if so, he must speak it by the creature, because he himself is unchangeable.” Not long after he inquires further about the same point, thus: “Or whether doth not this belong to the nature of that word of his, of which it is said, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’ For when it is said of him, ‘All things were made by him,’ it is evident enough that the light also was made by him, when God said, ‘Let there be light which if so, that which God said, ‘Let there be light,’ is eternal, (or from eternity,) because the Word of God, God with God, the only Son of God, is co-eternal with the Father, although God speaking in (or by) his eternal Word, the creature was made in time.” From this piece of discourse, these three things are evident: 1. That the author’s judgment was, that God did not give being unto things, by any multiplied or distinct acts or workings, but by one and the same most simple word, the efficacy and force whereof extendeth itself to the production of all particular creatures or beings, when, and at what time or times, the speaker pleaseth. 2. That this word was not spoken by him in time, but in or from eternity. 3, and lastly, That notwithstanding the word was spoken from eternity, yet the effects or productions of it received their respective beings in time. The same author, in the progress of the same tractate, relating, as it seems, to the last-recited words, demandeth thus (upon occasion of Moses’ reducing the works of creation to one day, Gen. 2:4, whereas in the former chapter he had digested them into six), “Is not this that which we endeavoured to show in a former book, that God *made all things together*, or at once?” And presently after, glancing by the way at those words (as the Latin translation readeth them), “He that liveth forever hath created all things together,” Eccles. 18:1, he plainly affirmeth, that the reason of this expression, “In the day that the Lord created heaven and earth,” &c. Gen.

2:4, “ was, that we might understand how that this day was seven times repeated,” (or mentioned before) “that so seven days might be made up.” To save the labour of transcribing, the reader may please to peruse from the same pen another testimony, as full and pregnant to the point in hand as any of these in the sixteenth section of this chapter. So that Augustine was grounded, and strongly built upon this foundation of truth, that no multiplication of effects argueth any plurality or multiplication of acts or exertions in God, in or for the productions of them.

Let the judicious reader consider, whether the same truth lieth not at large also in these words of Ambrose : “ There is not in God,” saith he, “ any accident, motion, or *new will*, or temporal counsel; nor is his thought varied according to the inequality of mutable things.” If there be no motion, or new will in Goa, he cannot be conceived to advance, or put forth any action, or operation in or from himself, for the effecting of any tiling in time, which he did not put forth from eternity. Nor is this saying of Bernard, less conscious of the same opinion, he it error or truth; “God cannot deny himself, nor not do the things which he hath already done, as it is written, ‘Who hath done the things which are yet to come?’” In this citation from the Scripture, “Who hath done the things which are yet to come?” he followeth the translation of the Septuagint, as the ancient writers more generally did, who make the Scripture so to speak, Isa. 45:11. In saying, that “God hath done the things that are yet to be done,” or to come, he clearly supposeth that God by one and the same simple act, which is really the same with his essence or being, giveth being to all things whatsoever, that either have been, are, or shall be hereafter. D’Arriba, an author formerly mentioned, as one that profited more than many of his fellows in the learning of the fathers and schoolmen, is more clear and distinct in the business than any of the former; yea, and asserts the opinion now contended for, as confessed with one mouth by all divines. “Secondly,” saith he, “I suppose that, which all divines with one mouth confess and teach, though many of them, conversing too much with temporal things, very hardly comprehend” (or understand) “what they most truly herein affirm, viz. that although the things which are properly created by God be multiplied, and distinguished in themselves ” (one from another), “ not only in respect of their proper and respective” (natures, or) “beings, but also in respect of the” (several) “times and places in which they receive the beginnings” (or first) “of their beings by a



true creation, yet the act of the Divine will, or the command or decree of God, by virtue whereof things are created, and begin to be, are not therefore multiplied, or distinguished between themselves.” This supposition of his he further explains and argues in that which follows. It were easy to multiply testimonies from this author, yea, and not hard to do the like from many others, of more credit haply than this, for the confirmation and countenance of the matter in hand. But for authorities I shall conclude, with that confident though brief assertion of an approved author of our own, formerly touched. “For in all divines’ opinions,” saith the late Bishop Davenant, “these propositions are true; God can will nothing in time; God cannot but have the will, which he hath; he cannot have any will which he hath not.” If God can will nothing in time, nor have any will which he hath not, then must needs that act of his will, by which he gives being unto all things, be from eternity: nor doth anything which is produced, or receiveth being in time, receive this being, by virtue of any presentaneous, or new act of the Divine interposal or concurrence, other than that which was exercised and put forth by him from eternity.

Give me now leave to add a reason or two, briefly, for the further clearing and asserting of this doctrine. First, it is a known maxim in reason, that everything must needs act in proportion, or according to the manner of the being of it. Now the being of God being most absolutely perfect, the manner of his acting or working must needs be most perfect also. So then all repetition, or multiplication of actings in the creature, for the obtaining of such ends which it desireth, arguing imperfection, (a principle upon which the apostle himself builds, Heb. 10:1—3: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of them, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they have ceased to be offered,” &c.,) it must needs be agreeable both to reason and truth to conceive that God, by reason of the infinite perfection of his being, must needs reach and compass all his ends, and, consequently, give being to whatsoever he intended should be at any time, by one and the same simple act or dictate of his will.

Secondly, the being of God being an eternal being, the formal consideration whereof, as all the diligent surveyors of eternity unanimously agree, standeth in an incommutability, *i. e.* in an absolute and utter impossibility of admitting the least alteration or change of

being, impossible it is that he should act any tiling in time other than what he acted in or from eternity; because any new acting in time supposeth an alteration or change in that being which so acteth. To act that afterwards which a man acted not before, infers a manifest alteration or change in his being, as viz., from the posture, habit, or condition of a man at rest, to the state or posture of a person in action. So that if it should be conceived, that God produceth or giveth being to those various and multiplied effects which successively receive being, and are produced in the world, by a multiplicity or plurality of acts, it must be conceived withal, that all this multiplicity of acts was levied and raised by him from eternity. But that God from eternity did not multiply productive acts according to the number of things, produced in time by him, for if he multiplied them at all, it must in reason be according to this proportion or number, is evident from hence; because these supposed multiplied acts must be conceived to have been exerted and put forth by him, either together, and, as it were, at one and the same instant, Or else successively, one after another. Successively raised they could not be, because all succession and divisibility are wholly inconsistent with eternity, in which there is nothing before or after other. Together and at the same instant they could not be raised; it being repugnant to a cause that is most singly, simply, and indivisibly one, without all manner of composition of parts, or otherwise, as God or the divine essence is, to exercise a plurality of acts together, especially really distinct, and differing one from another as the acts we speak of, in case they were supposeable in God, must needs be.

If any man shall yet demandingly object, But how can these things be? How is it possible to conceive that God by one and the same act, and this acted from eternity, should give being to all that infinite variety of creatures, motions, and actions, which are produced successively in the course and current of time ? I answer, 1. It is very possible to conceive that an infinite power may do anything, which imports perfection. Now as it imports a degree of perfection in men, as in point of wisdom, strength, powers &c., by one and the same action or engagement of themselves to bring several ends to pass; so doth it argue nothing but pure and mere perfection that God, by one act or word speaking, should bring forth a world of such and such a duration, so furnished in all respects, in every part of this duration of it, as seemed best suited to himself, with creatures,

motions, actions, and events of all kinds.

2. To aid and ease our imaginations a little, in conceiving the manner how that great wonder we speak of may be, Augustine, I remember, somewhere in his writings, findeth a kind of shadow or resemblance of it in the art, as he calleth it, or principle, by virtue whereof, or out of which, a man prayeth or speaketh, in respect of the several syllables, words, or sentences which, in praying or speaking, he uttereth successively by means of such a principle. The art or skill of praying is but one and the same principle in a man; yet, by virtue of it, even whilst it remains fixed and unmoved in the mind, the man produceth words successively as he pleaseth, such and such words in the first place, such and such other in the second, &c. In like manner God, by one and the same eternal act, eternally permanent in him, may express and utter himself unto the world by the producing of such and such things in every kind, according to all variety of times and seasons as himself pleaseth.

This for answer to that great and difficult objection against the perfect actuality of God, raised from the successive production of things by him.

Another objection seeming to war against the same property and perfection in God is this. If God be a pure and complete act, admitting no kind of potentiality in his nature or being, how then can he be a free agent? much less the freest of all others, as he is commonly affirmed to be? And if it be impossible for him to act otherwise than as he acteth, or to give being to any other things than what are produced by virtue of that one act which he put forth from eternity, must he not needs he conceived to act out of the necessity of his nature, and not out of the liberty or freedom of his will?

To this I answer more briefly, 1. To act out of the necessity of nature, imports not only the ignorance or nescience of what is so acted, but an utter incapacity in him that acteth, to reflect with understanding upon his action. And therefore no intellectual nature can be truly said to act out of the necessity of their natures, but out of the liberty of their wills, because they are capable, at least, of knowing what they act, and by denying, or withholding the consent of their wills, may prevent or forbear any action that passeth from them. Nor doth that of the apostle, Rom. 7:19, "the evil which I would not, that I do," any ways imply the contrary; because his meaning is not, that when he did that which was evil, and which he hated, his will for the present did not consent to the act; for had not his will now

consented, impossible it is that such an act should have been done by him ; but the evil which he would not, or which he hated, viz., in the standing and habitual frame of his heart, and out of the case of surprisal, this he did, viz., through temptation, or being prevented with human infirmity.

2. God is said, and truly, to be agens liberrimum, the most free agent of all others, 1. In respect of the exercise of his act, or execution of what he willeth; he is obnoxious to no disappointment in what he willeth to effect, by any wisdom or power whatsoever; whereas all other agents are hable, in what they intend to put in execution, to suffer a check and failure from him. 2. He is the most free agent, in respect of the elicit acts of his will (such are his purposes, decrees, intentions, desires, &c.) two ways, 1. As these are not occasioned or raised in him by means of any necessity or dependence which he hath upon any of their objects, or the things purposed, decreed, intended, or desired by him, but proceed out of the mere goodness of his will; whereas the elicit acts of created wills are (for the most part, if not always) begotten by some necessity or other of the things willed, lying upon him that willeth, as not being complete in the enjoyment of himself, without the willing or obtaining such things. 2. As these acts of his will arise and flow from their principle or fountain, with a greater enlargement thereof, and more strength of exertion, than the like acts proceeding from the wills of any other agent or agents whatsoever.

3, and lastly, The immutability of his will, or the determination of it to things actually and de facto willed by him, is no impeachment to the liberty or freedom of his will; but only supposeth or demonstrateth it to be another kind of liberty or freedom, much more excellent and perfect than that which is found in the wills of men or angels. That liberty of will which is competent unto, and found in these, includes a peccability or potentiality unto sin, which argueth weakness or non-perfection; whereas the unchangeable rectitude of the will of God, excluding all possibility of sinning, excludeth no degree at all of liberty or freedom from it, but only weakness, imperfection, and defectibility, which are the indelible characters of created wills.

Having thus cleared this foundation of truth, the perfect actuality of the Divine essence or being, let us consider what we may safely, and with evidence of deduction, build upon it. If then God be a pure and mere act, without all potentiality or possibility of change, in one kind or other, then

those volitions or acts of his will, which, with the Scriptures, we call election, reprobation, predestination, &c., are not to be conceived as acts that are past, or like to the volitions, purposes, or intentions of men, which, being once fulfilled and put in execution, die and cease to be in them; but are to be looked upon as being really and in truth one and the same thing with His essence and being, which is unchangeably permanent, only with relation to the effecting of such things in time which answer and hold proportion with the actings of men, when, they elect, reprobate, or predestinate. So that, for example, when God prevails by his word and Spirit with men in time to believe, and during this their believing, continueth the same gracious means towards their further establishment and edification, he is said to have elected them, not because he had formerly passed any act of election concerning them, which is now at an end and ceaseth; but because he doth by them or to them as men use to do by trees, when they have chosen them out of the forest for building, they fell, saw, hew, and every ways prepare and fit them for such, places in the building they intend, for which they are most proper and useful. Again, when God, upon men's neglect, refusal, or abuse of the means of grace vouchsafed unto them, shall withdraw these means to such a degree that they fall to open profaneness, looseness, &c., he is now said to have reprobated them, not because he had at any time before passed an act of reprobation against them, which was now put in execution, and consequently expired and over; but because he now acteth, or rather forbears to act, in relation towards them, as men are wont to act in reference to what they disallow, refuse, or reject, whether things or persons. Hence it is that the apostle Paul professeth his care of doing those things which might exempt him, not from under any decree of reprobation, which had already passed against him, but from falling under any such displeasure of God, which putteth men into an estate of reprobation, *i. e.* alienateth the heart, will, and care of God from them. "But I keep under my body," saith he, "and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself" GREEK, "should be" (or rather become, or be made) a "cast-away," or reprobate, 1 Cor. 9:27, as the word in the original properly signifieth, and is elsewhere so translated, Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 13:5—7; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:16.

Nor doth that expression of Paul concerning God's choosing men in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4, import any act in God

that is past, and now ceaseth to be in him, but only the standing counsel and good pleasure, which is eternal in him, being nothing else but himself and his Divine essence, of giving life and salvation unto all those who believe in Jesus Christ, by the means which he graciously purposeth also to vouchsafe unto them, and accordingly vouchsafeth for this end. The reason why the Scriptures usually express the acts of God which are eternally permanent in him, by verbs of the preterperfect tense, and in phrases importing time past, is, as Anselm long since well observed, because there being no words used, or known amongst men, which signify that kind of permanency or presence which is proper to eternity, words signifying the time past, are taken up by the Holy Ghost to express matters of that consideration and import rather than others, which signify either the time present or to come, because that which is past, being unchangeably past, and in no possibility of being any other than past, holds better agreement with, and is more like unto that which is eternally (and so unchangeably) present, than either that which is present in time or future; inasmuch as that which is present is not unchangeably present, but will shortly be past; and that which is future is not unchangeably future, but will in time be present, and after this, past.

Secondly, If God be a perfect, pure, and complete act, all in present being and doing, which is any ways possible for him either to be or to do, then must his counsels and decrees concerning men, and particularly those lately mentioned, election, reprobation, predestination, &c., of necessity respect them and relate unto them, not as individually or personally considered, or as such or such men by name, but in a specific consideration, or as persons so or so qualified, or of such or such a condition; so that, for example, God cannot be said to elect or to have elected Peter, simply considered as Peter, or as a person consisting of that individual body and soul of which Peter consisteth, but as an individual or person of such or such a species, sort, or kind of men. The reason why an election of men in a mere personal consideration, must needs be inconsistent with the perfect actuality of God, is because it evidently supposeth a mutability or possibility of change in him, as, viz. in point of affection, as from hatred unto love; which an election of them, according to a specific consideration, doth not. For if God, for example, shall be supposed to have chosen Peter, simply and merely as Peter, and not as a believer, or as a godly or righteous person; and if it shall be supposed

withal, that Peter before his conversion was a wicked and ungodly man, as the greatest part of men are before their conversion, especially at some distance of time from it, it will follow, that God in time comes to love that person which sometimes he hated, which evidently supposeth a mutability or changeableness of affection in God, according to a change made in the creature. The Scripture saith expressly of God, that “He hateth all workers of iniquity,” Psal. 5:5. Therefore, whilst Peter was a worker of iniquity, most certain it is that God hated him. But upon this Peter’s conversion, it must be supposed that God laid, aside his affection of hatred towards him, and put on the affection of love instead thereof, which imports a palpable and plain change in him.

If it be said, that such an election as I plead for, viz., of men under a specific consideration supposeth such a mutability in God as this, because according to the notion and tenor of this election, God must be supposed one while to hate Peter, viz. during the time of his non-conversion, and whilst he is a worker of iniquity, and another while to love him, viz. when he is regenerate ; I answer, no, the election asserted infers no mutability or change in God at all. The reason is, because it doth not make the persons of men merely and simply as such, the precise and formal object of election; but considered as the individuals of such a determinate species, sort, or kind of men, or rather the species itself of such and such men. Now, as it is as truly, as commonly, said in logic, that though all the individuals of a species be corruptible, may change or die, yet the species itself remains incorruptible and cannot be changed ; so in the case in hand, the love of God in election, and there is the same reason of his hatred in reprobation, being primarily and directly pitched and set upon a certain species of men, and not upon, the persons of men, save by accident, and indirectly only and in a consequential way; hence it follows, that the proper and formal object of God’s love, and so of his hatred, being unchangeable, his love itself cannot be said to be changed, nor yet his hatred, though the persons of men change never so often from good to evil, or from evil to good. Though all the righteous persons on the earth should apostatize and turn wicked, yet the species or kind of righteous men would be still the same, the same in nature, definition, worth, loveliness, and in whatsoever is essential or proper unto the species. And as God loved this generation or species of men with this love of election, before the foundation of the world, as the Apostle’s phrase is, and

consequently whilst as yet no individual person thereof was in actual being, in like manner were all the righteous persons in the world dead or degenerated into wicked men, the love of God towards the species would be still the same; yea, and towards all particular persons of men that should at any time rise up in this species. According to this notion of election, it argues no mutability or change at all in God, either in respect of his love or hatred, that one while he loves, and another while hates one and the same person; because it supposeth no person of men to be any otherwise, or in any other consideration, the object of his election or of his elective love, but only as righteous; nor any person of men the object of his reprobation or reprobating hatred, but only as wicked or ungodly. As it argueth no change or alteration in the heavens, or in the climates thereof, that a man removing himself by travel out of a cold climate where he felt the inconvenience of cold into a hot, partakes here of the accommodation of warmth, it only argues a change in the man in respect of his residence and place ; so neither doth it argue any change at all in God, nor of any affection in him, in case a man passing from sin, where he lived under the hatred and displeasure of God, unto righteousness, enjoys in this condition the love and favour of God. This only imports a change in such a man, but no change at all in God or in any affection of his. He now loves, but where and what he loved before, and hates still, as before he hated. Nor doth this notion or doctrine of election and reprobation any ways suppose, either righteousness to be the cause of the former, or sin of the latter, as opportunity may be given in the process of the discourse more fully to show.

Thirdly, If the actuality of God, or the Divine Essence, be so absolute and full, as proof hath been made, then can there be no such act or decree in him, as the reprobation of men, personally considered, from eternity. The reason is, because all men being in the loins of Adam, whilst he was yet standing, just and righteous, were partakers of the same condition of righteousness with him; and, consequently, of all privileges, amongst which the love and favour of God are predominant, equitably belonging to this condition. So that all men, whilst they were found in this condition or estate of righteousness, were the objects of God's love, who is frequently in Scripture said to "love the righteous," Psal. 146:8, to "bless the righteous," Psal. 5:12, "with his favour to compass the righteous as with a shield," &c. Ibid. Therefore, all this while, I mean during their



innocency and integrity in Adam, there was none of them that could possibly be the objects of God's hatred, or, consequently, of his reprobation. So that if any of them be reprobated, it must be afterwards, and in time: for upon the same supposition, which is manifestly true, viz. that they were all the objects of his love whilst they were righteous and innocent, it could not be from eternity. And, besides, if God loved them, personally considered, it is impossible that, without a change in his affection, which is absolutely inconsistent with the perfect actuality of his nature and being, he should ever hate them, or reprobate them, under the same consideration, or under any other, than as changed personally from righteousness unto sin, from innocency unto transgression. In which case God may be said to hate them, though he loved them formerly, without the least shadow of a change, either in himself or in his affection, as was lately proved.

Fourthly, and lastly, From that complete actuality of the Divine Essence, which hath been argued and asserted, it plainly follows, that all God's counsels, purposes, and decrees are absolute, unchangeable, irreversible, upon any terms, suppositions, or conditions whatsoever. Any change, or possibility of change, in any of these, supposeth a change, or possibility of a change in him; either of which are diametrically inconsistent with a complete, actuality, which excludeth all potentiality, and capacity of change in what kind soever. It is true, many of the purposes and decrees of God have conditions essentially included in them, and which are parts of them; but, taking the whole body or system of the decree, they are all absolute, irrevocable, indispensable. It is one of the great purposes and decrees of God, that if men believe, they shall be saved. Here is a condition, viz. believing, essentially included in the decree. But this condition doth not make the decree conditional, in reference to execution, nor any whit less absolute than those decrees are, which have no condition at all framed into them. For let the world stand or fall, let men, angels, and devils interpose, and oppose their utmost, this decree of God. shall stand, and be put toties quoties in execution: If men believe, they shall be saved. There is the same reason of all others, which are of like tenor and frame. And thus, from the perfection of the Divine nature, we have evinced, 1. The simplicity thereof: 2. The most pure and absolute actuality thereof; and from both these, in a way of lawful, clear, and evident deduction, inferred several considerations and conclusions

for the support and strengthening of our main building in this discourse: we have only one thing further to argue, from the infinite perfection of the nature of God. Therefore,

Thirdly, and lastly, If God in his nature and essence he absolutely and infinitely perfect, then can he act nothing, order, decree nothing, to the prejudice or hurt of any creature whatsoever, but only in a way of righteousness and equity, *i. e.* upon the consideration of some demerit or sin preceding. For not only to act, but to be able to act, unrighteously, or to intend evil, to or against the innocent, argues imperfection, and that in a very high degree. Because, as Job reasoneth and demandeth on the one hand, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and concludeth, "not one," Job 14:4; so may we on the other, who can bring an unclean thing out of that which is perfectly clean? surely not one. If the nature of God be infinitely perfect, there can be nothing in it, there can nothing proceed from it, or be done by it that is unjust, nothing unequal, nothing hard, nothing that any ways bendeth or inclineth to the hurt or damage of the creature, being yet innocent. And if so, then can there be no such purpose, no such decree in him, as men commonly call reprobation, or an irreversible decreeing or ordaining of men, much less far the greatest part off men, to eternal destruction from eternity; no, nor yet any such preterition of men, whether we conceive it under the notion of an act, or of a mere negation, which even in the sense of those men, who think to qualify the harshness of the matter with the softness of such a term, tendeth every whit as infallibly, as unavoidably, to the everlasting ruin and misery of the creature, as a positive reprobation could do. And indeed, the exchange of the word reprobation for a preterition no more easeth God, or vindicates the honour of his grace, goodness, love, bounty, towards the creature, than it would the justice or clemency of a judge, to plead on his behalf, that though he sentenceth guiltless men unto death, yet he takes special care that execution shall not be done upon them with hempen, but with silken halters. For, as not to feed a man's enemy, when he is an hungry, or when he is thirsty, not to give him to drink, is interpreted by God, to be an avenging of a man's self, (Rom. 12:19, compared with v. 20,) in like manner, for God to leave men in such a condition, or upon such terms, in and under which it is simply impossible for them to escape the vengeance of eternal fire, is constructively, and, as we used to say, neither better nor worse, than to ordain or decree him in a

positive way to the suffering of this vengeance.

But here it is commonly pleaded on God's behalf, and said, Yea, but it is no unrighteous thing, no unequal or hard thing in God, to reprobate, or predestinate to destruction, and that from eternity, which or how many of his creatures he pleaseth, without any consideration of sin at all. This is his lawful and just prerogative, as he is the absolute Lord of his creatures: and if he useth it in reference to such or such of them, who can say unto him, "Why dost thou so?" Or, however, if he be conceived to have looked upon men, as lapsed in Adam, and so sinful, when he passed by so many of them, and left them in the hand of eternal ruin, without all possibility of an escape, is there so much as any appearance of unrighteousness or hardness in this ? I answer,

1. As some men importunately officious unto kings and princes, and desirous to make their faces to shine above their native lustre in the world, have attempted to vest such prerogatives, as they call prerogative, in them, as a lawfulness of power to impose what taxes they please upon their subjects, to take away any man's estate they have a mind unto, to exempt such malefactors from death, which by the law of God ought to die, with many the like which have proved snares of dishonour and of danger unto them otherwise ; in like manner, some men desirous to commend themselves unto God, as men zealous for his glory more than others, study and invent notions and senses of some Scripture expressions, to bestow upon him in the name of prerogatives, which they presume are much for his honour and glory in the world, which yet upon due consideration are found most unworthy of him, and of a broad inconsistency with his glory indeed. For what relish or savour of honour or glory unto God can there be, in bringing him upon the great theatre of the world; speaking thus, I will cast out of my favour and devote to everlasting burnings, to torments endless, easeless, intolerable, insupportable, thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousands of my most excellent creatures, men, women, and children, though they never offended me, otherwise than children may offend many thousands of years before they are born ; yea, though I thus in the secret of my counsel intend to leave them irrecoverably to the most exquisite torments that can be endured, and these to be suffered by them to the days of eternity, without all possibility of escaping, though they shall do the uttermost they are able to please me, and to reconcile

themselves unto me; yet will I in words speak to their hearts, proclaim and profess myself unto them, to be a “ God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin,” Exod. 34:6—7; I will entreat them with bowels and great compassions, and profess myself aggrieved in soul because of their impenitency; I will allure them to repentance with all my great and precious promises of pardon of sin, of life, and glory, and all the great things of the world to come; yea, I will most seriously and solemnly protest arid swear unto them, by the greatest oath that is, even by my own life and being, that “ I desire not their death,” Ezek. 33:11. Can men indued with reason and understanding, or that know in the least what belongeth to matters of honour and glory, resent or savour anything in such proceedings as these, that is like to make a prerogative worthy the name, glory, and super-transcendent holiness and excellency of God? Most certain it is, that there is nothing in God, nothing that proceeds from him but what is both divisim and conjunctim, and that according to the principles of reason, and that light of understanding which himself shineth in the hearts and consciences and inward parts of men, just matter of praise, honour, and glory unto Him; of which more ere long. But,

2. That prerogative, or prerogative will, as some call it, which God stands upon in the Scriptures, and claims to himself as a royalty annexed to the crown of heaven and earth, either in the ninth to the Romans or elsewhere, in reference to the condemnation and eternal destruction of his creature, standeth not in any liberty or power claimed by him to leave what persons he pleaseth to inevitable ruin, only upon consideration of Adam’s sin, much less before or without any such consideration, hut to make the laws, terms, and conditions as of life, so of death, as of salvation, so of condemnation, and these indifferently and equally respecting all men, not such as men are apt to think meet and fitting for him to do, but what himself pleaseth, *i. e.* such as the counsel of his own will adviseth and leadeth him unto. For he is said not to act or work all things, or any one thing simply “according to his own will,” but “to work all things according to the counsel of his own will,” Eph. 1:11. So that in whatsoever God acteth or willeth, we are to look, not only for will, hut counsel, *i. e.* wisdom and tendency unto ends worthy of him; and these discernible enough, as was lately said, by men to be such, if they were

diligent and impartial in the consideration of them. As for example; the Jews thought it most equal, reasonable, and best becoming God, that he should constitute and ordain the observation of Moses's law to be the law of justification, life and salvation unto men; and the neglect, or non-observation of this law, to be the law of condemnation and of death. God here interposeth with his prerogative, and declares to them that his will and pleasure is otherwise, and that he constitutes and ordains faith in his Son Jesus Christ, to be the law of justification and life, whether joined with the observation of Moses's law or without it; and on the other hand, unbelief to be the law of condemnation and of death, though-in conjunction with the strictest observation of Moses's law. This prerogative, indeed, God himself pleads and asserts to himself, with a majestic and God-like authority, speaking thus to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," Rom. 9:15. As if he should say, men shall not prescribe unto me laws or terms of showing mercy; I will not be advised or obliged by them, whom, *i. e.* what manner of persons, or how qualified, I shall justify and save; I mean to follow and to keep close to the counsel of mine own will in these great and most important affairs, which concern the life and death, the salvation and destruction of my creature. The same prerogative the Apostle also vindicateth unto him afterwards in the same chapter, in the similitude of a potter. "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Rom. 9:21. Meaning that God had a like equitable power or prerogative over the great mass of mankind in Adam, to make what laws of life and death unto them he pleased, and to appoint who, or what manner of persons should be saved, and what manner of persons should be condemned, which the potter hath over the lump of clay which is before him, to make what vessels he pleaseth for honour, and what again he pleaseth for dishonour. But of this passage, as also of that, verse 18, we shall speak more at large towards the close of the discourse, where we intend an entire explication of the 9th to the Romans, from the beginning of verse 6, to the end of the 23rd. In the meantime, let this be taken along by way of caution, about what hath been delivered in this section, viz. that though the Jews thought it most equitable and most beseeing God, to justify men by the works of the law, rather than by faith in Jesus Christ, which notwithstanding, was the counsel and good pleasure of God about

justification ; yet this counsel and good pleasure of God, especially being from time to time so signified unto them by God himself as it was, might very well, had they not been negligent or willingly blind, have been apprehended and submitted unto by them, as a way and means of justification far more rational, more full of wisdom, and equity, and every ways more honourable unto and better becoming God, than that way and method of their imagination, I mean by the observation of Moses's law.

3. Though it be not to be denied, but that God hath an absolute sovereignty and lordship over his creature, *i.e.* a lawful power to dispose of it as he pleaseth, yet it is an horrible indignity and affront put upon him, and no less than a constructive denial of his infinite grace, goodness, mercy, bounty, love, &c., to affirm that he exerciseth or administereth this sovereignty and power upon the hardest terms, and most grievous unto his creature that can lightly be imagined, yea and no ways conducing unto his own glory; which, notwithstanding, they affirm, in effect, who maintain that: from eternity he left, or purposed to leave, the far greatest part of his most excellent creatures, men, to everlasting misery and ruin, without any possibility of making an escape therefrom. Suppose that God should grant an absolute power unto parents over, their children, as that if they pleased they might slay them, or dispose of them to be slain, which some learned men are not far from supposing that God did grant unto parents under the law, or else to expose them to the wide world as soon as they are born, to suffer all the extremities that are incident to flesh and blood; can it be imagined, that persons of loving, kind, and tender dispositions by nature, would ever marry out of a desire to have children, that they might show their prerogative or absolute power over them, either in disposing of them unto death, or exposing them unto misery as soon as they should be born ? Or are such intentions or desires as these any ways consistent with sweetness, goodness, and tenderness of disposition? How prodigiously then, and portentously inconsistent must it needs be with the grace, goodness, mercy, bounty, and love of God, which are all infinite, to create millions of men-creatures with a desire or intention to declare his prerogative over them, in leaving them irrecoverably, irrevocably, unavoidably, to the easeless endless torments of hell ?

3. Suppose such a preterition or dereliction of the creature as this, could be reconciled or argued into some tolerable consistency with the grace,

goodness, sweetness, love, bounty, and mercy of God, yet the wisdom of God will not bear them, as being most disadvantageous unto him in point of glory; or at least, comparatively disadvantageous, I mean, in respect of that other most wise, just, and equal disposition of them, wherein, and according unto which, he is asserted to have predestinated or purposed so many of them, be they fewer or be they more, as should truly believe unto life and glory ; and the residue, be they fewer or be they more, viz., all those who should not believe, being capable through years of believing, and otherwise competently rational, unto destruction. Such a predestination of men from eternity as this the Scriptures clearly and frequently hold forth; yea, those that are contrary minded in the present controversies, subscribe hereunto: and without controversy such a predestination as this is fairly and fully consistent with the glory of his wisdom, and highly commends and magnifies either all or the greatest part of his attributes, without the least disparagement or obscuration unto any. Whereas that doomfull preterition, that blood which many wring out of the Scriptures instead of milk, hath no rational or intelligible comport at all with any of them, but casts a kind of spirit of obscurity and contristation upon them all. Nor did any of those, I verily believe, who have been the rigidest and most confident assertors of it, ever so much as undertake to show how, or wherein, it gratifieth or complieth with any of them; no, nor have they all been able, with any tolerable satisfaction to men of impartial and free judgments, to discharge it of those imputations of malignancy against the glory of the Divine attributes which the disassertors of it have charged upon it.

5, and lastly, The Scriptures are so far from countenancing or asserting any such exercise of prerogative in God over his creature, which consists in a most severe and dreadful dereliction of them from eternity to unavoidable and endless misery, that they still present him as a Creator of far another spirit, yea, of a spirit directly contrary to that which such a dereliction notoriously imports. These frequently commend him as a Creator very gracious, loving, merciful, and bountiful towards all the works of his hands, and towards men above all; insomuch that our Saviour himself recommends him unto his saints, in his deportments even towards the worst and most unworthy of men, as an absolute pattern for them to imitate in doing good and showing mercy even to their enemies. “But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," Matt. 5:44, 45. If it shall be supposed that God from eternity hath irreversibly doomed to eternal destruction those evil and unjust ones on whom he maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth rain, it must be supposed withal, that he intends the greatest evil unto them that can be imagined, even whilst he doth these good things Unto them. If so, then must they who imitate him in such ways be the most accursed hypocrites and dissemblers under heaven; making show of love and kindness in their outward deportments, whilst war and blood are in their hearts, towards men; yea, and doing good unto them, with a purpose and desire of bringing so much the greater evil and destruction upon them thereby. But the Scripture everywhere abounds in giving testimony to the love and goodness of God towards all his creatures. The apostle Peter styleth him, a faithful Creator, and willeth Christians to commit their souls unto him in well doing, 1 Pet. 4. ult., upon that account, viz., as one, or as a God, that would faithfully perform and discharge the relation of a Creator unto them. In calling him a faithful Creator, he clearly intimates that there is a kind of natural tie or engagement upon every author of beings whether unto persons or things, which promiseth unto those who receive being from them in any kind, a regular and due care in. them for their preservation and good. The relation of a parent, father or mother, promiseth unto the child a regular care, desire, and endeavour in the parent for the comfort and wellbeing of it. By virtue of this promise it is that, as the apostle informs us, parents stand bound to provide, and lay up for their children, 2 Cor. 12:14. And parents who do carefully perform such engagements as these unto their children, may well and properly be called faithful parents. So the relation of a mother promiseth. unto the infant born of her, and that with much asseveration and natural solemnity of protest, all care and tenderness for the wellbeing of it. In respect of this solemn promise it is, that God himself demandeth, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Isa. 49:15, implying that such women are very unnatural and unfaithful that can. Yea, God himself speaking thus of the ostrich, "She is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers," Job 39:16, clearly implies, that



this creature only excepted, there is an universal tenderness and care in all others towards their young ones. In like manner every creature hath a very great and rich assurance from that very relation wherein it stands unto God, as a Creator, that upon a regular deportment of itself towards him, and such as any ways becomes a creature towards the Creator or Maker of it, it shall receive protection, preservation, and every good thing from him. Yea, the Scripture plainly implieth, that there must be a very great breach on the creatures part in point of degeneration and unworthiness before God looks upon himself as discharged from that care for the preservation, and wellbeing of it, which he promised, as it were, unto it, in his being the author of being unto it. Consider that passage in the Prophet Isaiah: “For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that *made* them will not have mercy on them; and *He that formed them* will show *them no favour*,” Isa. 27:11. Doth not this clearly imply, that had not this people been very enormously and intolerably corrupted and degenerated, as it were, into the spirit and actions of brute beasts, suffering the glory of the work of God in their creation utterly to sink within them, had they but quitted themselves like a people of any competent reason or understanding, the relation of a Creator in God towards them, would have wrought so effectually in him on their behalf, that he would have showed them mercy and favour in delivering them. The creature must depart and go astray very far from the Creator, and grow, in a manner, quite out of kind, before the Creator will or can cease to know, love, and respect it, as his creature. Hence it is that we find God himself so frequently mentioning and insisting upon his relation of a Creator unto his people, when he seeks to satisfy and comfort them, as touching his love towards them, and care over them. “Thus saith the Lord that *made* thee, and that *formed* thee from the womb, which will help thee, fear not, O Jacob, my servant,” &c., Isa. 44: 2. So again, “Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb ; and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have *made*, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you,” Isa. 46:3, 4. “Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and *his maker*,” &c. Isa. 45:11. Once more (to pass by many other places of like import) “But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand,” Isa. 64:8. As in the former passages,

God strengthened the faith of his people by remembering them that he was their Creator and Maker, and consequently bare the affection and love of a Creator towards them; so in this last, they themselves declare how effectually that consideration, viz., of the relation of a Creator in God towards them, had wrought upon them to the strengthening of their faith in his love towards them, and care over them; and accordingly plead the same in their requests to him.

Nor is it prejudicial in the least to that demonstration which we intend to make from the said passages (with their fellows) viz., of the love and care of God as a Creator, to all the works of his hands, to pretend, that in these places and the like, God speaks only to his Church, and his elect ones. For, 1. The relation of a Creator in God is uniform, one and the same, towards the elect (believers) and towards reprobates, or unbelievers; the one being the workmanship of his hands, as well as the other ; and therefore as promising to the one as to the other, if they understood or considered the voice of this promise. 2. If God, notwithstanding the relation of a Creator in him, were likely to have reprobated his creatures from eternity, especially had this people believed that he had de facto so reprobated millions of them, it had been a very slender support and encouragement to their faith, that he should remember them of his relation unto them, as their Creator. For might not they, upon such a supposition as this, have replied unto him, Lord, why dost thou so much inculcate into us the consideration of thy being our Maker and Creator, as if there were any thing in this to comfort us, or to relieve our faith concerning thy love to us, or care for us? Do we not know that thou art a Creator to many thousand thousands in the world, whom notwithstanding thou hatest, and castedst out of thy love without any cause given on their parts, from eternity? Therefore what assurance of grace and favour with thee can we receive upon any such account as this, that thou art our Maker and Creator? So that evident it is, that God himself doth acknowledge a gracious tie and engagement upon him, as a Creator, to love, respect, and take care for his creatures, until they voluntarily renounce and disclaim their relation unto him, as his creatures, by walking rebelliously against him, or suffering the god of this world to deface the glory of his workmanship in them. And whereas he compareth himself in tenderness and care over his creature, unto a hen, which gathereth her chickens under her wings, they who make him like

unto the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and. forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beasts may break them, and is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers, Job 39:14, 15, (which astorgy God himself imputeth to want of wisdom and understanding in her,) have the greater sin, representing him altogether unlike unto himself.

Other scriptures there are exceeding many, which testify aloud the grace, and love, and goodness of God, as a Creator, towards his creatures. "The Lord," saith David, "is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works," Psal. 145:9; *erga omnia opera ejus*, as Piscator; *i. e.* are extended and shown unto all his creatures. But had he intended from eternity to abandon the far greatest part of the best of his works, men, to the vengeance of eternal fire, could his tender mercies, in any tolerable sense, he said to be over these? Especially, can those men justify David in such a saying as this, who conceive and teach that whatsoever God doth in a providential way for such men so abandoned, as in causing his sun to rise or his rain to fall upon them, in filling their hearts with food and gladness, in giving them health, wealth, liberty, peace, &c. he doth all with an intent to harden them, and so to bring that heavy destruction upon them with the more severity and terror in the end, whereunto they were predestinated and appointed from the beginning? Will men call health, peace, liberty, meats, drinks, &c., given with an intent to become snares unto men, and to bring inevitable damnation upon them, the tender mercies of God? The holy man Job, being conscious to himself of no signal departure from God by unrighteousness in any kind, looked upon that dispensation of God in so severely afflicting him, as very strange, and that only upon this account, that he was his Creator. "Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about," meaning, that he was the sole author of being unto him, "yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast *made* me as clay; and wilt thou bring me into the dust again?" Job 10:8, 9. If Job thought it strange that God, being the author of life and being unto him, should, without any grand offence or provocation given him, handle him with so much severity, as he conceived, in the outer man, how incredible would the doctrine of those men have been unto him, who teach that God from eternity hath irreversibly consigned over to the merciless torments of hell fire millions of millions of men who never offended or provoked him in the least? The

same author doth elsewhere also notably assert the universal love, care, and respects of God as a Creator towards men, alleging the consideration of these, as a grand engagement upon him to deal justly and equally with his servants. “If I did despise the cause of my man servant, or of my maid servant, when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ? Did not he that made me in the womb, make him ? and did not one fashion us in the womb ?” Job 31:13—15. Clearly intimating a tender care and regard in God towards men, even the poorest and least considerable of them. After the same manner, Elihu also advanceth the poor into equal respects with princes, before God; viz., because they, as well as these, are the works of his hands. “ How much less to him who accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor: *for they are all the work of his hands,*” Job 34:19; clearly implying, that that relation wherein every man standeth towards God as his creature, is a pledge of security unto him that God tenderly loveth and respecteth him (excepting only the case before excepted).

From the Scriptures lately produced, (unto which double their number, confederate in the same truth with them, might be added,) it manifestly appears that such a hatred or rejection of the creature by God from eternity, as is commonly taught and received amongst us, is broadly and wholly inconsistent with that love, tenderness, and respect which the relation of a Creator to a creature everywhere imports; and consequently is not to be looked upon as any prerogative worthy of him.

## CHAPTER 5.

**Four several veins or correspondences of Scriptures propounded, holding forth the death of Christ for all men, without exception of any. The first of these argued.**

THE premises considered, methinks it is one of the strangest and most importune sayings that, to my remembrance, I ever met with from the pen of a learned and considerate man, which I find in the writings of a late opposer of universal atonement. "I know," saith he, "no article of the gospel which this new and wicked religion of universal atonement doth not contradict." That which he calls a "new and wicked religion," the doctrine of universal atonement, I shall, God assisting, and granting life and health for the finishing of this present discourse, evince both from the main and clear current of the Scriptures themselves, as likewise by many impregnable and undeniable demonstrations and grounds of reason, to be a most ancient and divine truth; yea, to be none other but the heart and soul, the spirit and life, the strength and substance, and brief sum of the glorious gospel itself: yea, I shall make it appear from ancient records of best credit, and from the confessions of moderm divines themselves, of best account, adversaries in the point, that universal atonement by Christ was a doctrine generally taught and held in the churches of Christ for three hundred years together next after the apostles. And if I conceived it worth the undertaking, or were minded to turn, the stream of my discourse that way, I question not but I could make it as clear as the sun shining in his might, that there is no article of the gospel," as this man's dialect is, I mean, no great or weighty point of the Christian faith, can stand with a rational consistency unless the doctrine of universal atonement be admitted for a truth. Yea, upon a diligent and strict inquiry it will be found, that, if any man holds such a limited redemption as is commonly taught and believed amongst us, and yet withal lives holily and like a Christian, he acts in full contradiction to such a principle, and happily denies that in practice which erroneously he holds in judgment. God, in such cases as these, makes grapes to grow on thorns, and figs on thistles; nor doth there want anything but sense and visibility of the disproportion between the cause and the effect, to make

the lives and ways of such persons miraculous. Neither doth anything nor all things that I could ever yet meet with, either from the tongues or pens of the greatest patrons of particular redemption, deliver me from under much admiration, that conscientious and learned men, professing subjection of judgment to the Scriptures, should either deny universal or assert particular redemption; considering that the Scriptures, in particularity, plainness, and expressness of words and phrase, do more than ten. times over deliver the former; whereas the latter is nowhere asserted by them, but only stands upon certain venturous consequences and deductions, which the weak judgments of men, so much accustomed to error and mistake, presume to levy from them; together with such arguments and grounds, which, upon examination, will be found either to have no consistency with the sound principles either of reason or religion, or else no legitimate coherence with the cause which they pretend unto. Let us first hearken unto the Scriptures lifting up their voices together for the redemption of all men by Christ without exception: we shall afterwards, in due process of discourse, give a fair consideration to those inferences and consequences of men wherein the strength of their Scripture proofs standeth for the support of the contrary opinion.

And first it is considerable, that the Scriptures do not only speak to the heart of the doctrine asserted in great variety of texts and places, but also in great veins and correspondences, or consorts of texts, each consort consisting of several particulars of like notion, and phrase. I shall recommend only four of these companies unto the reader; which when we shall have pondered in some or all the particulars respectively relating unto them, we shall add, to make full measure, the contributions of some single texts besides.

The first division or squadron of Scriptures which speak aloud the universality of redemption by Christ, are such which present the gift and sacrifice of Christ as relating indifferently unto the world. The name of this kind of Scriptures, for the number of them, may be Legion, for they are many. Some of the principal and best known of them are these: “God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten,” &c., John 3:16; “that *the world* through him should be saved,” ver. 17. “This is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world*,” verse 29. “My flesh, which I will give for the life of the *world*,” John 6:51. “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole*

*world*, 1 John 1:22. “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the *world*, 1 John 4:14. “For I came not to judge the *world*, but to save the *world*,” John 12:48. “For God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto himself,” &c., 2 Cor. 5:19. To omit many others.

The second post of Scriptures standing up to maintain the same doctrine with uniformity of expressions amongst themselves, are such which insure the ransom of Christ, and the will or desire of God for matters of salvation, unto *all men* and *every man*. Some of these are —“Who gave himself a ransom for *all*,” 1 Tim. 2:6. “Because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were all dead; and that he died *for all*, that they who live,” &c., 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15. “That he, by the grace of God, should taste of death *for every man*,” Heb. 2:9 ; “who will have *all men* to be saved,” &c., 1 Tim. 2:4; “not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance,” 2 Pet. 3: 9. “Therefore, as by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to the justification of life,” Rom. 5:18; with some others.

A third sort or party of Scriptures, confederate with the former, (for substance of import, and between themselves for matter of expression,) are such which hold forth and promise salvation indifferently to him, and to whosoever will or shall believe. Of this sort are these, with their fellows: “And *him* that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” John 6:37; “*He* that believeth in me shall never thirst,” ver. 35; “*He* that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,” Mark 16:16; “That *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish,” John 3:16; “That through his name, *whosoever* believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,” Acts 10: 43; “Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ *unto all*, and upon *all* that believe; for *all* have sinned, Rom. 3:22, 23. It were easy to make this pile also much greater.

A fourth association of Scriptures, all pregnant with the doctrine we assert, consists of such places where Christ is said to have died for those who yet may perish, yea, and actually do perish: and again, where such men are said to have been bought by him, and to have been “sanctified by his blood,” who yet through their own negligence and wilfulness in sinning, bring destruction upon themselves, and perish everlastingly. Places of this kind are famously known. “Destroy not him with thy meat,

*for whom Christ died,*” Rom. 14:15; “And through thy knowledge shall the weak *brother perish, for whom Christ died?*” 1 Cor. 8: 11; —“ Even denying the Lord that *bought* them, and bring upon themselves swift *destruction,*” 2 Pet. 2:1 ; “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning,” 2 Pet. 2:20; “ Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” Heb. 10:29; “Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses?” Matt. 18:32, 33, &c.

Let us begin with the texts of the first of the four orders mentioned, where the death of Christ is presented as relating unto the world. From the tenor and import of all the Scriptures of this denomination and tribe, it will be made evident that Christ died for all men, without exception of any, the word world in these places being necessarily to be understood in the proper and comprehensive signification of it, (I mean, for all men and women in the world, in and according to their successive generations,) and not for any lesser or smaller number, as for some of all sorts, for the elect, for those that shall believe, or the like. We shall, for brevity’s sake, argue only some of these places, and leave the light of their interpretations for a discovery of the sense and meaning of the rest.

The first proposed of these, was that place of renown, “God so loved the world, that he gave,” &c. John 3:16. Evident it is from hence, that Christ was given, viz. unto death for them, or for their sakes, whoever they be that are here meant by the world. There are hut three significations of the word, that to my remembrance I ever heard of as competitors in this place. First, some by the world, here understand the elect dispersed up and down the world. By the elect, they mean all those, and those only, who shall in time actually be saved, whom they call the elect, because they judge them to have been chosen by God from eternity out of the generality



of mankind, with an intent to be by him in time, with a strong hand and power irresistible, 1. Brought to believe; 2. Caused, or made to persevere believing unto the end; and, 3.

Hereupon eternally saved, the residue of men being absolutely rejected, and left to that unavoidable and heavy doom of perishing everlastingly. But that this is not the sense of the word world in the Scripture in hand, will appear by the light of these considerations.

1. The word [GREEK WORD], here translated world, was never known to have any such sense or signification in the Greek tongue; nor was it, nor is it to be found in any author who wrote in this language, before, or about the time, when John wrote his gospel, in such a signification, nor yet in any near to it. Now the gospel, as is generally acknowledged, and that upon sufficient grounds, being written in the Greek tongue chiefly for the gentiles' sake, amongst whom this language was known and understood far and near, that they might be brought to believe, and so be saved by it, it is no ways likely that the evangelist should use words, especially in such master veins and main passages of it, as this is, in an uncouth, unknown, and unheard of signification.

2. Nor can it be proved, that it is to be taken in the sense now opposed, in any other place of the Scriptures themselves ; but in *very* many places it signifies the universal system, body, or generality of men in the world, (we shall not need to instance for the proof of this, places being so frequent and obvious,) as also for that part of the generality of men which is opposite, and contradistinguished to the saints, *i. e.* to the elect, in their sense of the word elect, who yet would have these signified by the world. This latter signification of the word world, is evident in these Scriptures : —“ We know that we are born of God, and that the whole *world* lieth in wickedness,” 1 John 5:19; “ Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the *world* cannot receive,” &c., John 14:17; “ If ye were of the *world*, the *world* would love her own; but because ye are not of the *world*, but I have chosen you out of the *world*, therefore the *world* hateth you,” John 15:19; to omit many others.

3. If by the world in the Scripture in hand be meant the elect, in the sense of the assertors of this signification, then it will follow, that God out of his great love gave Christ unto those, or for those, who stood in no need of him, at least either to preserve them from perishing, or to invest them with a right or title to eternal life, which yet are here laid down as the two

only, or at least as two main ends of that great gift. For if exemption from perishing, or salvation, be absolutely, and without all consideration, awarded or decreed by God unto men before, or from eternity, they have a full right and tide unto them, or unto the possession and enjoyment of them, by virtue of this award or decree, without the intervening of anything else whatsoever. For what better right or title can there be to the enjoyment of anything than a decree of heaven ? or the award of him who hath an unquestionable right and power to dispose of all enjoyments whatsoever, as, and to whom he pleaseth? But more of this consequence hereafter.

4. The structure itself of the sentence, and tenor of the words, riseth up against this sense of the word in question. For (1.) If by the word world we understand the elect, we destroy the very grammar of the place, and make it an uncouth and harsh sentence, such, doubtless, as cannot be paralleled in any author, nor yet in the Scriptures themselves. Read we then the place thus, "So God loved his elect, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever." —I demand how, or in what regular sense, that universal distributive article, whosoever, or GREEK, everyone that, shall be understood? It is a thing generally known to those that understand anything in the rules of grammar, yea, the vulgar dialect of those that speak reason or common sense confirmeth it, that partitive or distributive particles of speech always suppose a difference, at least in possibility, between the things parted or distributed, and this in reference to what occasioneth the distribution. As for example. Suppose a great king having many sons, should express himself thus: I so love my children, that whichsoever of them shall be dutiful unto me, I will bestow principalities, dukedoms, or other great matters upon them ; should he not plainly imply a possibility, at least, that some of them might not prove dutiful unto him ? In like manner, if the word world, in the Scripture in hand, should signify the elect, the distributive, whosoever, must needs imply that some of these elect might possibly not believe, and so perish; because believing, and not perishing thereupon, occasion the distribution here made.

(2.) Though our Saviour, in this period of Scripture, mentioneth only the benefit intended by God in the gift of his Son, to those that shall believe, viz., non-perishing and the obtaining of everlasting life; yet he plainly implies, and supposeth withal, the misery and loss which they

should certainly suffer who shall not believe. Except this he supposed, we shall altogether misfigure our Saviour's mind and scope in the place, and make him speak more like a man void of understanding than himself. For then the taste and savour of his words would be this: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth or not believeth in him should not perish, but," &c. Therefore, certain it is, that he in the place in hand as well insinuates the condemnation or perishing of those who shall not believe, as asserts the salvation or non-perishing of those who shall believe. And besides, it is contrary to reason, especially in seriousness of discourse, in a positive and strict manner to suspend that upon the performance of such or such a condition which may be had without any such performance. This then being granted, that our Saviour here supposeth the certain perishing of those who shall not believe, the place, according to their sense, who by the world will needs understand the elect, must run thus: "So God loved the elect, that whosoever of them, believed should not perish but on the contrary, that whosoever of them should not believe, should perish. Which, according to their principles, against whom we now argue, is as if a man should say, whichsoever of my sheep is no sheep, hut a goat, shall have no pasture with his fellows.

(3.) They who by the world here understand the elect, must, if they will not baulk with their principles, suppose that Christ speaks at no better rate of wisdom or sense in this Scripture than thus: "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever did that which was not possible for them to decline or not to do, should not perish, but," &c. Whoever, being serious and in his wits, required that in the nature of a condition from any man, especially in order to the obtaining of some great and important thing which he, of whom it was required upon such terms, was necessitated or had no liberty or power but to perform? What father ever promised his son his estate, either in whole or in part, upon condition that whilst he rode upon a horse he should not go on foot? or upon condition that he would do that, which a force greater than he was able to resist should necessitate him to do? So that the whole tenor and carriage of the verse renders the interpretation of the word world, hitherto encountered, a mere nullity in sense, reason, and truth.

5. The context and words immediately preceding, will at no hand endure that sense of the word world, against which we have declared hitherto. This little word for, "*For* God so loved," &c., being causal, importeth not

only a connexion of these words with what went before, but such a connexion or relation as that which intercedes between the cause and the effect. So that the words in hand must be looked upon as assigning or exhibiting the cause or reason of that effect, which was immediately before mentioned. This being granted, as without breach of conscience it can hardly be denied, it will appear as clear as the light of the sun, that by the word world, in the place under contest, cannot be meant the elect only. The tenor of the two next foregoing verses, for together they make but one entire sentence, is this : “ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, or every one believing in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” So that the effect here mentioned and expressed is the salvation and everlasting happiness of what person or persons soever of men, or of mankind, shall believe in Christ. The reason or cause hereof our Saviour discovers and asserts in the words in hand: “For God so loved the world, that he gave,” &c. If now by the world we shall understand only the elect, the reason or cause here assigned of the pre-mentioned effect will be found inadequate to it, and insufficient to produce it. For God’s love to the elect, and his giving his Son for their salvation only, is no sufficient cause to procure or produce the salvation of *whosoever* shall or should believe on him. For certain it is, that there is salvation in Christ for no more than for whom God intended there should be salvation in him. If there be salvation in him for none but for the elect only, then is it not true that whosoever believes in him shall be saved. For certain it is, that no man’s believing puts any salvation into Christ for him therefore if it were not there for him before he believed, yea, or, whether he believed or not, neither would it be there for him, though or in case he should believe.

6, and lastly. That by the word world, in the Scripture in hand, is not meant the elect, nor any thing equivalent hereunto, is evident also from the context in the verse and words immediately following, where our Saviour goeth forward in his doctrine, thus: “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,” John 3:17. This particle, for, being, as we lately noted, causal or ratiocinative, plainly sheweth that he useth the word world, or speaks of the world in this verse, where he speaks of the condemnation of it, in the same sense, wherein he spake of it in the former, and the means

of the salvation of it; otherwise he should not argue *ad idem*, *i. e.* to the point in hand. Now then to make him here to say, that God sent not his Son into the world, *i. e.*, to take the nature or to live in the condition of the elect, to condemn the elect, but that the elect, &c., is to make him speak as never man, I suppose, spake, but not for excellency of wisdom or gracefulness of expression, but for weakness in both. To say that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn his elect, were but to beat the air, or to fight against a shadow; I mean, solemnly to deny that, which no man was ever likely to imagine or affirm. For how, or by what way of apprehension, should it ever enter into any man's thoughts that God should send his Son into the world to condemn those, whom out of his infinite love he had from eternity decreed to save with a strong hand, outstretched arm, and power omnipotent and invincible ? Or are not these the elect, in their notion of election, with whom we have now to do ? Therefore certainly, the world, in the Scripture before us, doth not signify the elect.

A second interpretation of this word asserted by some, is, that by the world is meant *genus humanum*, or mankind indefinitely considered, *i. e.*, if I rightly understand the mind of those who thus interpret, as neither importing all, nor any of the individuum or persons contained in or under this species or kind, but only the specific nature of man common to them all; as when the Jews said of the Centurion, that he loved their nation, Luke 7:5, their meaning was not, either that he loved all that were Jews, without exception of any; nor yet that he loved any particular person of them more than another; but only that he was lovingly disposed towards them as they were such a particular nation, as *viz.*, Jews. But that this interpretation either falls in, in substance, with the former, and so is already condemned with the condemnation thereof; or else, with the third and last, which, as we shall hear presently, findeth in this Scripture a love in God towards all the individual persons of mankind, without exception of any; or else, that it vanisheth into nothing, and hath no substance at all in it, may be thus demonstrated. If by mankind, indefinitely considered, be neither meant a special or determinate number of the persons of men (which the former interpretation asserteth) nor yet the universality, or entire body of men, consisting of all the particular persons of men which either have been, now are, and shall be hereafter, (which the third interpretation avoucheth,) then is it only

the nature of man abstractively considered, which we may, with the schoolmen, call *humanitas*, humanity, or the specific nature of man, not the persons of men, some, or all, which God precisely loved with that love, out of which he gave his only begotten Son. If so, then it undeniably follows, that Christ was given out of as much love to one person of mankind as to another, or, which is the same, not out of any love to any at all. For certain it is, that *humanitas*, or the specific nature of man, is not the person of any man. And so, according to this interpretation, God should love the reprobates as much as the elect, and consequently give his only begotten Son to death, as well for the one as the other. Besides, if it were the human nature, indefinitely considered, (in the sense pre-declared,) which God is here said to have loved with that love, out of which he gave his only begotten Son, from hence also it must needs follow, inasmuch as the reprobate (so called) partakes every whit as much in this nature as the elect, that Christ was given as much for the one as for the other. Again, if by the world, be meant the human nature, in the sense distinguished, the distributive particle, *whosoever*, with the following words, will be found incongruous, and no ways answering the former part of the verse, either in sense or regularity of construction. For the human nature is but simply one and the same nature or thing, nor doth it contain any plurality of species, or individual human natures under it; whereas a distribution cannot be but of some general, which containeth many particulars under it. And upon the supposal of such a sense of the word world, to make the construction regular in the latter part of the verse, the tenor of the whole must run thus: So God loved the human nature, that he gave his only begotten Son, that what human nature soever believed in him should not perish, &c. If this construction be ridiculous, so must that interpretation needs be which produceth it. Lastly, (to answer the illustration of this interpretation from Luke 7) the Jews, who said the Centurion loved their nation, did not suppose that he loved only a handful or small number of their nation, and hated all the rest with an irreconcilable hatred ; nor did they say, that he so loved their nation, that whosoever of this nation should trust him, he would be a signal benefactor unto them, or the like : nor did they, by their nation, understand the Jewish race, lineage, or descent, abstractively considered, and without reference to any person or persons whatsoever of this nation (for their nation, in this sense, was wholly incapable of any fruit or

expression of his love, or of having a synagogue built to it or for it.) So that this instance no ways parallels or fits the interpretation of the word world, for the illustration or confirmation whereof it is brought. But the plain meaning of the Jews saying that the Centurion loved their nation, was this, that he was ready and willing to do any office or service of love to any person or persons of their nation, because of their national relation, rather than to any other, upon such a consideration, when he had opportunity. The two pretenders being nonsuited, a sufficient way, I presume, is made for the admission of the right heir. Therefore,

The third, and last, interpretation of the world, in the Scripture under debate, is, that by it is signified *universum genus humanum*, the whole compass of mankind, or all and every individual person subsisting at any time in the human nature, without exception of any. This exposition stands with the ordinary and best known, signification of the words, and withal gives smoothness and regularity of construction unto the period or sentence, which both the former (as upon examination hath been found) take from it, is of perfect accord with the context, and besides magnifies the love of God in the freeness, fulness, and extent of it incomparably above and beyond either of them; for,

1. The word world, GREEK, very frequently and familiarly both in the Scriptures themselves, and in other authors, signifieth the generality of mankind, or of men: in the Scriptures especially, when it relates unto persons, it seldom or never signifieth anything else, but either the generality of men simply and absolutely, or else that generality of men which comparatively comprehendeth all men, I mean the whole number of wicked and unregenerate men, who, in respect of their vast multitudes, and inconsiderable number of the godly (in comparison of them) are by John termed, the whole world, “And we know that we are of God, and *the whole world* lieth in wickedness,” 1 John v. 19. Or, lastly, the promiscuous generality of persons, good and bad together, be they fewer or more, where a man converseth, or hath opportunity to come amongst, or speak unto. Several instances were lately given, of the second signification of the word, from the Scriptures. Instances of the first signification also there are many. “Ye are the light of the world,” Matt. 5:14. “And the world knew him not,” John 1:10. “And I speak to the world those tilings which I have heard of him,” John 8:26. “But I have chosen you out of the world,” John 15:19. “Whom thou hast given

me out of the world,” John 17:6. “God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” Rom. 3:6. “As by one man sin entered into the world,” Rom. 5:12. “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, and the weak things of the world,” 1 Cor. 1:27. “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world,” 1 Cor. 14:10. The word being never used in the Scripture for the elect or godly party in the world, considered by themselves, or apart from others, but either for the wicked of the world alone, or apart by themselves, or else for both godly and wicked taken together, and as mixed one with another, it were very strange that our Saviour should use it in that by sense, and unheard of elsewhere, in so eminent a place and passage of the gospel as that in hand, and not in the familiar and best known signification of it.

2. This interpretation of the word accommodates the whole verse or sentence with clearness of sense and regularity of construction, as is evident unto those who understand what the one and what the other of these mean. For by it the genuine and proper use and import of the distributive particle, *whosoever*, is fully salved, which is destroyed by either of the former, and such a distribution of a general made by it, which supposeth a possibility of a difference between the particulars contained under it, and into which the said general is distributed, according to the exigency of those things, in reference whereunto the distribution is made. As for example: here is a distribution made of this general, the world, *i.e.* of all mankind, by this distributive pronoun, *whosoever*; the occasion of this distribution is to show who, or what particulars contained under this general, *i. e.* what particular persons of mankind shall not perish, but have everlasting life; and withal, by a tacit antithesis or in a consequential way, as hath been already noted, to show what other particulars contained under the same general shall perish, and not have everlasting life. The former are said to be such as shall believe on the only begotten Son of God; the latter are clearly implied to be such who shall not so believe. Now, if it should be supposed that there was, or is, no possibility that any such difference should be found between the particulars, into which the general is here distributed, as believing, and not believing, the distribution would be altogether needless and vain; yea, and would dissense the whole sentence. These things are plain and sensible to every understanding that knows what belongs to common sense or regularity of syntaxis.



3. This exposition of the word world, makes a clean joint, a rational and pleasant coherence, between this verse and that which follows; as also between this and the two verses immediately precedent. The words of the two preceding verses are these, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Now, certain it is, that Moses did not lift up the serpent with an intent of healing to be conferred by it upon such or such a definite or determinate number of persons; nor with an intent, either on his part or on God’s part, that none should look upon it but only such a parcel or determinate number of men; but with an intent, not only that whosoever in the event did look upon it, and could not but look upon it, might look upon it; but that whosoever would, might look up unto it, and that whosoever, being stung with the fiery serpents, did look up unto it, should be healed thereby. This is evident from the story. “Make thee,” saith God to Moses, “a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that *every one that is bitten*, when He looketh upon it, shall live,” Numb. 11:8. Now, then, all men without exception being stung with that fiery serpent, sin, unless Christ should be lifted up upon the cross, with an intent on God’s part and in himself; 1. That every man, without exception, might believe in him; and 2. That every man that should believe in him, should be saved by him. He could not be said to be lifted up, as (*i. e.* upon the same terms of an universal accommodation on which) Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Therefore, our Saviour, to give the world a satisfying account how it comes to pass that the Son of man, meaning himself, should be lifted up upon such terms, viz. for the universal benefit of salvation unto all mankind, he assigns the love of God to the world, as the reason or productive cause of it. For God so loved the world, that, &c. Therefore, by the world, he must needs mean all mankind, or the generality of men, that were bitten or stung with sin, unless we will say, that God gave his Son for the salvation of those whom he loved not.

The tenor of the following verse is this, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but,” &c. In these words our Saviour confirms his former assertion, touching the love of God to the world, in giving his Son for the salvation of it, by rejecting that reason or motive of his sending him into the world, which men might imagine did occasion this his sending by God, and besides which, there could none other well

be imagined, but only that which he had asserted, viz. an intent or purpose in Him, in God, of condemning the world by Him. Now to make Christ to say, that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn mankind, or the generality of men, as having sinned against him, is to make him say that which is savoury and comfortable, and that which, opposeth, or is apt to prevent such a sad imagination, as was very incident to the minds of men through a consciousness of the guilt of sin, viz. That if God ever did, or should, send his Son amongst them, it would be to judge or condemn them. But to make him say, that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the elect, *i. e.* those few whom he infinitely loved, and to whom he had peremptorily, and without all possibility of reverse, decreed non- condemnation before this sending of him, is to make him speak at an extreme low rate of sense or reason, and to labour, as the proverb is, in lifting a feather; inasmuch as no such thought or imagination as this was ever like to bear upon or trouble any man's spirit. Inasmuch then as no other interpretation of the world, in the former verse, but only that which hereby understandeth the generality of men-sinners, will accommodate this verse, in respect of the connexion between them, with any tolerable sense, evident it is, that that must needs be the true interpretation thereof.

By the way, when Christ saith, “ For judgment I am come into this world,” &c., John 9:39, He no ways opposeth what he Here saith, viz. “ That God sent him not into the world to condemn the world.” For in the former place, he speaks not of the intent, but of the event; in this, not of the event, but of the intent of his sending or coining into the world. Christ was not sent into the world with any intent on God's part, nor came with any intention of his own, to make those which see to become blind, meaning either to augment or to discover to their shame the spiritual blindness and ignorance in such men, who being ignorant, presume of their knowledge by one means or other; but with an intent to heal the blindness of all, to their comfort, peace, and glory. Therefore, if any man through a foolish and proud conceit of his own knowledge and wisdom, shall stumble at, or reject the gospel and doctrine of Christ as foolishness, and so discover himself to be blind, ignorant, and foolish in the end; this is merely adventitious and accidental, in respect of the antecedent, primary, and direct intention of God in sending Christ into the world, as Calvin himself affirmeth.

If it be demanded, But did not God intend, that whosoever should stumble at or reject Christ, should, in such a sense, be made blind? I answer, Yes, doubtless : God did intend to punish all manner of sins with judgments suitable to them. But his intention of making those blind, in the sense declared, who should reject Christ or his doctrine, was not that intent or purpose, out of which he sent Christ into the world, which was the genuine and natural product of his love, but such an intent which his perfect hatred of sin, especially of sin committed against the law of grace, formed in him.

4. The interpretation of the word world, now under assertion, magnifies that divine attribute, the love of God, incomparably more and above either of the former. They, who by the world understand the elect only, (which is the substance, also, of the second interpretation, unless it chooseth rather to resolve itself into this third, as was lately proved,) allow a very small, narrow, and inconsiderable sphere, for so noble, active, and diffusive a principle, as the love of God is, in comparison of those who extend it to the Whole circumference of mankind. The whole element, and vast body of the air, in all the dimensions of it, height, depth, length, and breadth, make but a proportionable sphere for the sun, wherein to display the fulness of the glory, and to express the activity of his abundant light: nor will the whole universe of creatures, take the whole number and entire host of them, a *prima ad ultimam*, et *ab ultima ad primam*, make a theatre any whit too large, capacious, or extensive, for the abundant riches and fulness of the love of God to act like themselves upon. They who present the love of God in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, as contracted to the narrow compass of the elect, *i. e.* of those only who shall in the end be saved, and preach this for the gospel unto the world, do by men, in respect of their spiritual accommodation, as God should do by the world in their temporal, in case he should keep his sun in a continual eclipse, suffer ten parts of the light of it to be perpetually obscured.

5. This interpretation, we now plead, is of fair and full consistency with those things which the Scriptures so frequently and constantly teach and affirm, concerning the nature of God, his mercy, sweetness, love, goodness towards all his creatures, his equal and impartial administration of rewards and punishments in the world, his non-acceptation of persons, his ardent, serious, and compassionate desires that none should perish,

but that even the vilest and wickedest of men should return from the evil of their ways, and be saved, his not delighting in the death of those who do perish, with much more of like consideration and import. There is an obvious and manifest agreement between the exposition we contend for, and all such veins of Scripture expression, as these: whereas the other interpretations are at an absolute and manifest defiance with them.

6. And, lastly, the sense now argued for is attested by Calvin himself upon the place, with several other Protestant divines.

“ Both, ” saith he, “ are here distinctly delivered unto us; namely, that faith in Christ is of a saving nature *unto all*; and that Christ therefore brought life, because his heavenly Father would not have *mankind* to perish, *which he loveth*.” And more plainly afterwards : “ He useth a note of universality, both that he may invite all to the participation of life, and that he may cut off matter of excuse from unbelievers. The word world, which he useth before likewise, importeth as much. For though there will be nothing found in the world worthy the favour of God, yet he showeth himself *propitious*, or favourable, *unto the whole world*, in that he calls all men without exception to believe in Christ, which is nothing else but an entrance into life.” In the former of these passages, the interpretation we stand for, is largely enough asserted; but in the latter, we have it with measure heaped up, pressed down, and running over. For here, he doth not only say that God showeth himself propitious, or favourable unto the *whole world*, but further, that he calls all men to faith in Christ, and invites all men to participation of life. Therefore, doubtless, his judgment was, at least whilst he had this Scripture before him for his steerage, that there was life and salvation in Christ for all men, and that upon such terms that all might partake of it, as well one as another: and, consequently, that he died for all men; inasmuch as there can be no life in him for those to partake, for whom he died not, no more than there is for the devils. Gualter, another Protestant author of approved learning and worth, avoucheth the same sense: “ And this,” saith he, “ he more clearly expresseth, when being to name those whom God so loved, he doth not mention Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, Moses, David, the prophets, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or holy martyrs, but the world, which our evangelist in his epistle affirmeth to lie wholly in wickedness, and of which Christ himself more than once affirmeth the devil to be the prince.” So that this writer, by the world, doth not understand the elect only, or

the world of the elect, whereof the devil is nowhere affirmed by Christ to be the prince, nor which is anywhere affirmed by John to lie wholly in wickedness, but the world at large, and which comprehendeth reprobates as well as the elect. But of all our reformed divines, there is none speaks more expressly and professedly to the mind of the interpretation held forth, than learned Musculus. "By the world," saith he, speaking of the Scripture in hand, "he understands the universe of mankind: so that here his love of the world, and his love of men, is the same." And elsewhere, thus: "After the same manner it is in this redemption of mankind whereof we speak. That reprobates and desperately wicked men partake not of it, *is not through any defect of the grace of God*: nor is it meet that, for the sons of perdition' sake,' it should lose the glory and title of an *universal redemption*, since *it is prepared* (or procured) *for all*, and all are called to it." Nor were there men wanting in the Synod of Dort itself, who, though anti-remonstrants by profession, yet frequently by expression did plainly close with that doctrine which they would be thought to oppose concerning the particular in hand. Our English divines lay down this thesis: "God, out of compassion to mankind being fallen, sent his Son, who gave himself a price of redemption for the sins of the *whole world*." In the explication of this thesis they say, "That price which was paid for all, and which shall certainly benefit all that believe, yet shall not benefit all men," &c. And presently after, "So then Christ died for all men, that all and *every one*, by the mediation of faith, may, through the virtue of this ransom, obtain remission of sins and eternal life." Evident it is that these men, by God's love to the world," understand his love of compassion to all mankind, inasmuch as not a part or some, but the whole and all particulars of mankind, were fallen. Besides, saying, "that all and every one"; may "through the mediation of faith obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life through the virtue of Christ's ransom," they clearly imply that remission of sins and salvation are purchased by Christ for all and every man upon the same terms and after the same manner, and with the same intention on God's part, inasmuch as he intends the donation of remission of sins unto no man, notwithstanding the virtue of the ransom of Christ, but through the mediation of faith; and through this mediation he intends, yea, promiseth, it unto all men without exception; yea, so say our countrymen, that all and every one may through the said mediation obtain it. Nor were these men altogether without company in that Synod

in such expressions. Immediately after the suffrage and sentence of the ministers of Geneva upon the second article, I find one (I suppose of those who were sent from Geneva) delivering himself thus: "There is a certain common love of God towards all men, wherewith he loved all mankind, being fallen, and seriously, willeth or desireth the salvation of all." Afterwards, speaking of the condemnation of unbelievers, "such an event as this," saith he, "is not of itself intended by God, but accidentally follows through, the default of men." Yet again, "If this redemption be not supposed as a common benefit bestowed upon all men, that indifferent and promiscuous preaching of the gospel which was committed to the apostles to be performed in all nations will have no true foundation." Doubtless, that which is bestowed upon all men by God, was by him intended for all men in the purchase or procurement of it, and this out of love to all those on whom it is bestowed and for whom it was purchased. It were easy to multiply quotations of like import with these from many convened in that Synod, who are supposed to have condemned that doctrine which holds forth universal redemption by Christ for an error; but the certain truth is, that if this was their intention or attempt, the truth was at many turns too hard for them, and prevented them, and gained many a testimony from her adversaries.

For the fathers, they who shall please to peruse and ponder the commentaries or exposition of Austin, the chief of the Latin fathers, and of Chrysostom, the chief of the Greek, upon the place, will easily perceive that their sense of the word *world* was the same with that which hath been avouched. "Is not Christ life?" saith the former, "and yet Christ died; but death died in the death of Christ, because life, being dead, slew death: the fulness of life devoured death: death was swallowed up in the body of Christ." In all these passages evident it is that the Father speaks of that death which had equally seized upon all men, or whereunto all men, without exception of any, were alike obnoxious: therefore, affirming this death to be dead by the death of Christ, to be devoured by the fulness of life, &c., he supposeth it equally dead, devoured, removed or taken away in respect of all men. Awhile after, having rehearsed these words, "For God sent not his Son to judge the world, but that the world should be saved by him," he infers thus: "Therefore, as much as lieth in the physician, he came to save or heal the sick. He slayeth himself who will not observe the precepts of the physician. He came a Saviour unto the

*world*. Why is he called the Saviour of the *world*, but that he should save the *world*?" Doubtless, he that speaketh these things had not yet dreamt of any signification of *the world* in the Scripture in hand, but only that which we have asserted; nor did he imagine that Christ was given or sent into the world upon any other terms than those which equally and indifferently respected the healing of all that were sick, or the saving of all that were lost: otherwise why should he insert this provisional clause, "as much as in the physician lieth," meaning Christ? This plainly importeth that he came to heal such sick ones, who notwithstanding slew themselves by neglecting his precepts; yea, and that he could do no more than he did in or by his death to save those from perishing who do perish, and consequently that he died as much for these as for those who are saved.

Nor, doubtless, had the other (I mean Chrysostom) any other notion of *the world* in the said Scripture than the former: for, describing those whom God is here said to have loved, he gives no other description of them than which agreeth as well to the reprobate as elect, affirming them to be such "who come from the earth and ashes, who are full of an infinite number of sins, who injured or offended him without ceasing, very wicked," or deserving no pardon. And afterwards, "but we neglect" or despise "him, being naked and a stranger, who died for us. And who then shall deliver us from the punishment" or judgment "which is to come?" clearly implying, that those for whom Christ died may notwithstanding suffer and undergo the wrath and punishment "which is to come." It were easy to levy many more quotations, both from the authors already mentioned, and from many others as well ancient as modern, of a full and clear concurrence with the interpretation given; but I take no pleasure in quotations from men, nor do I know any great use of them, unless it be to heal the offence which truth is always apt to give to prepossessed and prejudicate minds. The use which more commonly is made of them is a grand abuse, being nothing else hut the interposing or thrusting of the credits and authorities of men between the judgments of men and the truth, that so the one should not easily come at the other. However, we have, I trust, made it fully evident by many demonstrations, in full conjunction with the judgments of learned men, that the Scripture in hand casteth the light of that love of God, out of which he gave his only begotten Son to death, with an equal brightness upon all mankind; and

consequently, that this death of his faceth the whole posterity of Adam with the same sweetness and graciousness of aspect. The Scripture last opened, speaking so plainly and fully (as we have heard) the point in hand, might well be accepted as a sufficient security, that all its fellows mentioned with it, as in effect they speak, so likewise they intend and mean the same thing. Yet because prejudice is froward, and hard of satisfaction, let us impartially examine one or two more of the company; we shall find universal atonement as well at the bottom as at the top, as well in the heart as in the face of them. The former of the two shall be that of the apostle Paul, "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation," 2 Cor. 5:19. That by the world, which God is here said to have "been in Christ reconciling unto himself," cannot he meant the elect only, hut the universality of men, is clear upon this account: First, it is not here said, that God in Christ did actually, or in facto esse, reconcile the world unto himself, but that "he was reconciling the world," &c., i. e. God was, and is, and ever will be (for the unchangeable perpetuation of the acts of God are usually expressed in the Scriptures by verbs signifying the time past, for the reason specified in the last chapter) in, i. e. by, or through Christ, following and prosecuting his great and gracious design of "reconciling the world unto himself." Participles of the present tense active, import the currency or carrying on, not the consummation, or ending of an action, or endeavour. Secondly, By the "reconciling the world unto himself," in, or through Christ, which is here ascribed unto God, must of necessity be meant, either such an act or endeavour in him, by which he gains, or rather seeks and attempts to gain the love and friendship of the world, which was and is full of hatred and enmity against him; or else such an act, by which he went about to reconcile himself, i. e. to render and make himself propitious and benevolous unto the world. Now, take either of these senses, it is impossible that by the word "world" should be signified only the elect, or indeed anything but the generality of men.

If we take the act of God, here termed the "reconciling the world unto himself," in the former sense, (which doubtless is the true sense of it, as clearly appears from the next verse, and subsequent clause in this,) by the world cannot be meant only the elect, because God doth not by Christ, or in Christ, held forth and preached in the ministry of the gospel, seek to



bring over these only unto him in love, or to make only these his friends; neither doth he send the word of reconciliation (as the apostle calleth it) i. e. the gracious message of the gospel, by which this reconciliation is to be actually made only unto them, but promiscuously to the generality, or universality of men, without exception of any, “Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven,” Mark 16:15; and, therefore, Paul did but keep to his commission, when, as he saith, he “preached Christ, warning *every* man, and teaching *every* man in all wisdom, that he might present *every* man perfect in Christ Jesus,” Coloss. 1:28. And, 2. Evident it is, that in the ministry and preaching of this word, God doth as well and as much, and after the same manner, persuade the obstinate and many of those who never come to believe, as he doth those who are overcome and persuaded hereunto. It is said concerning the ancient Jews, that “the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place and yet it follows, “But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” 2 Chron. 36:15, 16. So that God is every whit as serious, as urgent and pressing in the ministry of his word and gospel, upon those who remain obdurate and impenitent to the last, as he is upon those who in time come to repent and to believe on him. And Paul (Acts 17) preached the same sermon, used the same addressment and application of the word to those who mocked which he did to those who believed, Acts 17:32—34. Evident therefore it is, that God as well seeks and attempts the reconciling of such unto himself by Christ, who in fine perish, as he doth those who are saved; and that he doth vouchsafe as well the same inward as outward means, at least remotely unto both, shall be proved in due place.

Again, 2. If we shall take the latter sense of the phrase, wherein God is said to be “reconciling the world unto himself,” and understand hereby such an act, whereby he renders or seeks to render himself loving, gracious, and propitious unto the world, neither yet can the word “world” signify anything but the generality or universality of men, or, howsoever, not the elect in particular. The reason is, because God cannot, in any tolerable sense or construction of words, be said to reconcile himself unto those with whom he is not angry or offended, or to render himself loving and propitious unto those to whom his love is so great already, that by

reason of it he peremptorily resolves to give unto them absolutely the greatest and most desirable of all good things, even, no less than eternal life itself, which includes in it the richest and fullest enjoyment of God himself, whereof the creature is capable. Now we know this is the posture, or relation, wherein the elect stand before and unto God (at least as is generally held and maintained by those that are contrary minded in the present controversy,) viz. as persons with whom God is so far from being angry or displeased, that he is pleased by absolute purpose or decree to confer eternal life upon them. Therefore certainly God cannot be said by any act whatsoever to reconcile himself, or render himself propitious unto these. But now, by the world, understand the great bulk or body of men in the world, with whom God is, and may truly and properly enough be said to be displeased for their sins, so he may be said to reconcile himself unto them; at least if by a reconciling, we mean such an act, by which he takes a course, or useth means, to bring himself into a complacency, or love of friendship with them, as when a father useth means to recover his son of the phrensy, or plague. It is true, a father loves his son with a benevolous affection, or with a love of pity, as we commonly call it, even whilst he is under a phrensy, and hath the plague upon him; hut he takes no pleasure in his company, doth not delight to converse with him as with a friend, bestows nothing upon him at the present, but only in order to his recovery; and in case by all that he doth for him in this kind, he cannot recover him, he never proceeds to settle his inheritance upon him. But when and whilst he doth that which is proper to recover him out of such distempers, he may be said, in this sense, to do an act whereby to reconcile himself to his son, viz. to make way for himself to take pleasure in his company, and to converse with him and to deal further by him as a friend. In like manner it is as true that God cannot properly or according to the usual sense or signification of the word, be said to do any act whereby to reconcile himself to the world in general, much, less to his elect in particular, because he always bears a benevolous affection to it, as appears, John 3:16, the Scripture lately opened. So again, Tit. 3:4, and elsewhere, he was never so far angry at offended with it, but that he seriously and affectionately sought the good of it; yet in such a sense or consideration, wherein, notwithstanding his affection of benevolence or commiseration towards it, he is said to be angry with men for their sins, and to hate them for their wickedness, and

to resolve to destroy them everlastingly if they repent not, he may be said to do such an act, whereby to reconcile himself unto it, as, viz., when he doth that by which, he is like to take men off from their sins, and to bring them to repentance ; and consequently to cause his own anger and hatred towards them for their sins to cease. But however, this is not the primary or direct sense of the phrase in the Scripture in hand, as was formerly intimated, hut only that which follows upon it. For God by seeking to reconcile the world unto himself, in the former sense, takes a course likewise to reconcile himself unto it, in the latter. But take either the one interpretation .or the other, there is no colour or pretence, by the “world,” to understand the elect only.

If it be objected and said: Yea, but God is here said to be “in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Doth not this imply that God reconciles none unto himself but those only, to whom he doth not impute their trespasses or sins? Now it is certain that God doth impute their sins unto all men, his elect only excepted: therefore he reconciles none unto himself in Christ but these only. To this I answer,

1. By concession; It is true, God doth actually, and in the event reconcile none unto himself by Christ, *i. e.* he brings no man to faith and repentance, but withal he forgives him his sins; or, which is the same, he imputes not his trespasses unto him. But,

2. By way of exception, I answer further, that it was no part of the apostle’s intent in this place to speak of any spiritual or inward act of God, by which particular men are actually, and *de facto* converted or reconciled unto him, and consequently obtain forgiveness, or a non-imputation of their sins; but only concerning that great and gracious dispensation or act of grace, together with his counsel or project therein, in which or whereby he did, as it were, posture himself, and take a standing with the best advantage to save the world. For this end and purpose, I mean for the saving of the world or of men, upon such terms as he was willing, and as only became him to save them, it was necessary, 1. That he should reconcile them unto himself. It was no ways convenient for God, as neither consisting with his wisdom nor holiness, to take those into part and fellowship with himself in his own blessedness and glory, who should hate him and be full of enmity and hard thoughts against him, and would not admit of terms of reconciliation with him. 2. To effect

this reconciliation, and to bring men over unto him in love, who generally through a consciousness of guilt, contracted by their evil works, and because of that contrariety between his holy laws, and their lusts and vile dispositions, hated him, it was necessary that he should take a course, and have a means suitable and proper, and which every ways became a God of infinite wisdom. Now this course or means the apostle here expresseth to be, the non-imputation of their sins unto them, *i. e.* the tender, offer, or promise of the forgiveness of all their sins, upon their reconcilment. God, by the proposal and tender of such an incomparable grace, favour, and blessing as this unto men, upon such sweet and gracious terms, makes account to reconcile the world unto himself, to bring off his creature, man, from their hatred and hard thoughts, to a love and honourable esteem of him. 3, and lastly, To put himself into a way or capacity of making so rich and glorious a proposal as this of forgiveness of sins unto the world, he put himself, as it were, into his Christ; or, as our apostle's expression is, he was in Christ; meaning, that that which God did, or intended to do, by his being in Christ, as mediator, was immediately and in reference unto a further end, that by means of his death he might offer free pardon and forgiveness of sins unto the world; mediately, and as more principally intended, that he might, by means of thus offer, reconcile the world unto himself, *i. e.* prevail with men to repent of their sins, and turn in faith and love unto him. Evident it is from the very letter of the context, that the apostle's intent in this Scripture was only to express and declare the tenor or purport of the gospel, or, as he calls it, of that word of reconciliation, the ministry whereof, he saith, in the end of the verse, was committed unto him. Do but read in the former verse to this, and you will clearly see it: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of the reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling," &c. As if he should say, he hath given unto us the ministry of that reconciliation, the tenor, substance, or purport whereof is this, *viz.*, or to wit, "that God was in Christ reconciling," &c. So that here is nothing at all affirmed, or intended to be spoken concerning men actually or effectually reconciled or brought home unto God, or what their privileges are, in one kind or other; hut only to show how or by what means God hath projected or contrived the reconciling of men to himself, which is expressed to be, as hath been said, by the message or doctrine of

forgiveness of sins, sent and preached unto them by Christ.

Nor are the best and most confessedly orthodox of our reformed divines, dissenters from the interpretation given of the Scripture in hand, especially as concerning the sense and import of the word world. "God," saith Musculus upon the place, "inhabiting his Son Christ, and directing him in all things, reconciled unto himself not us only, hut even the world, i. e., all mankind, winch was, is, or shall be from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, giving his Son unto death for all men. And soon after: "It is most true which the apostle saith, that God reconciled the world unto himself in Christ, not imputing their sins unto them as concerning the work itself of reconciliation, being prepared or made ready for all mankind, and sufficient for them." Calvin also, though not altogether so expressly as the former, yet with clearness enough, secondeth the same interpretation, writing on the place thus: "But the fuller and richer sense is, that God was in Christ, and then, that he reconciled the world unto himself." And a little after, "To what purpose then did God appear in Christ unto men? for reconciliation, that they who were strangers might be adopted for sons." If this were the end of that reconciliation for which God appeared in Christ unto men, that they who were strangers might be adopted for sons, it must needs follow, that the end which God propounded unto himself in this reconciliation, was the adoption of all men without exception, inasmuch as all men were strangers unto him. Among the ancients, Chrysostom expounds the word, world, in the text in hand, by the word, which properly signifies the inhabited part of the world, or the persons of men wheresoever inhabiting in all the world; in which sense it is used, Acts 17:31, and in very many places besides in the Scriptures.

A third text of that squadron of Scriptures yet in hand, and the last of this character that we shall insist upon, is that mentioned from 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Some, to keep the light of that truth which we have now under assertion, from shining out of this Scripture in their eyes, and in the eyes of others, have essayed, amongst them, a three-fold depravation of the sense and import of these words, the whole world. By the whole world, say some, John means the elect living in all parts of the world; others, men of all sorts and conditions; others, Jews and Gentiles. Some, to avoid the like danger, I mean of being convinced of the

truth, and suspecting, as they have cause enough, the security of those interpretations, take sanctuary under the wing of this distinction. Christ, say they, is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, *i. e.* of all men in the world in point of sufficiency, but not by way of intention on God's part. Yet let us afford the honour of a trial to the three interpretations mentioned. For the first, which, by the whole world, understands only the elect, this hath been resolved into smoke already, pages 132—140, in this chapter; where, if the reader please to look back, he may see it smoking still. The other two being confederate with it, for both the one and the other are the same in substance of matter with it, and differ only in terms of explication, must needs fall with it. For both they, who by the whole world, in the Scripture in hand, understand men of all sorts and conditions, by these men of all sorts and conditions understand the elect only; and they also, who interpret Jews and Gentiles, understand no other, either Jews or Gentiles, but the elect only. So that all the three interpretations are interpretatively but one and the same. And, therefore, as in case Abraham's son by Sarah had been sacrificed, Isaac could not have escaped; no more can any one of the three interpretations mentioned stand, if any one of them fell, there being but one and the same faint spirit of life in them all.

That which their respective assertors plead for their legitimacy, is of no value at all. For their plea is, that the word "world," and "the whole world," do in several other places signify sometimes the elect only; sometimes, men of all sorts, ranks, and conditions: sometimes likewise, Jews and Gentiles; and hereupon they conclude, that they may admit of the same sense and signification, both in the Scripture in hand, and in all the other Scriptures usually brought upon the theatre of discourse, for the same end and purpose with, it. But the mouth of this plea is easily stopped. For

1. The determinate signification of a word in one place, is no argument of the same sense or signification of it in another place. Elohim, Gen. 1: 1, signifieth him who is by nature GREEK, John 17:3, a true God subsisting in three persons; but this is a weak proof that it is to be taken, or that it may be taken in the same sense, Psal. 82:6, where the prophet introduceth God speaking thus to, and concerning the rulers of the earth: I have said, "Ye are Elohim," or gods. That the word GREEK signifieth, 1 Peter 3:3, as it is translated, "adorning," is no argument at all that it so

signifieth John 3:16, or in twenty places besides where it is used. Nay, in one and the same period or sentence, where the same word is twice used, it does not follow that because it is used, and must necessarily be taken in such or such a sense, determinately, in one of the places, therefore it must be taken in the same sense likewise in the other. As for example; where Christ saith to the scribe, “ Let the dead bury their dead,” Matt. 8:22 because in the first place, by dead, are meant persons spiritually dead, or dead in sins and trespasses; it no ways follows from hence, that therefore it signifieth such as are spiritually dead in the latter place. ’So likewise in that passage of our Saviour, “ Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; hut whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst,” &c., John 4:13,14; by water, in the first place, he clearly meaneth that common and material element commonly known by the name of water; but in the latter, water analogically only, and spiritually so called, viz, the gift of the Spirit, as himself interpreteth, John 7:39; 4:14, compared. Therefore, to heap up a multitude of quotations from the Scriptures, wherein the word “world,” or “ the whole world,” doth or may signify either a certain species, or determinate kind of persons living up and down the world, or men of all sorts and conditions, or Jews and Gentiles; and from either an evidence, or possibility of any, or all of these significations in these places, to infer either a necessity or possibility of a like signification of the words, either in the Scripture in hand, or in those other places argued in this chapter, is hut to heat the air, or build upon the sand.

2. If the said words, either may be taken, or necessarily must be taken, in the places so multiplied, in any of the said significations, it is a sign that there is a sufficient ground of reason in the contexts respectively, to enforce either the necessity or possibility of such significations. Now then to infer or suppose, either a like necessity or possibility of the same signification, where there is no sufficient ground in the context to enforce either, which is the case in hand, but many sufficient grounds to overthrow such significations, as hath been in part already, and shall, God assisting, be out of hand further manifested, as concerning the texts insisted upon in this and the following chapter, is as if I should prove that such or such a man must needs be a prisoner at London, because he is a prisoner in York; or that he hath the liberty of the Tower of London, because he may walk where he pleaseth within the liberties of York

Castle. The signification of words in one place, is not to be adjudged by their signification in another, unless both the contexts stand uniformly, and impartially affected towards this signification.

3. That neither of the two texts already opened, will at any hand endure any of the three significations of the word world, lately mentioned as pretended unto, hath been argued into the clearest evidence. That the text in hand no whit better comports with any of them than they, appeareth thus:

(1.) If any of the said three significations of “the whole world, should be here admitted, the apostle (or rather the Holy Ghost by the apostle) must be supposed to speak after no better rate of reason than this, “Christ is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins” of some few particular men besides, whom you know not, or of some few persons, as well of the Gentiles as of the Jews. For none of the three interpretations amounts to anything more than this, as is evident. They who interpret, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, by Jews and Gentiles do not mean the two great divisions of men in the world commonly distinguished by these names, in all the particulars of either division, (for this is the sense and interpretation which we contend for,) but that small and comparatively inconsiderable remnant of both, who in conclusion come to be actually saved. There is the same consideration of the two other interpretations. Now what weight, or worth of notion, or savour of sense there should be, in informing the Christians here written unto, that Christ was the propitiation for some few men’s sins besides theirs, or as well as theirs, I yet understand not.

(2.) The natural and plain inclination of the context, leads to the interpretation and sense of “the whole world” contended for. For the apostle doth not simply say, that “Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world,” but he saith it by way of an emphatical antithesis, or addition to this saying, that he was “the propitiation for their sins.” “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” This last clause, “but also for the sins of the whole world,” is clearly added by way of augmentation or further strengthening to the ground of their faith and comfort. Now evident it is, that there will be little or nothing found in it tending to any such end, as the further enlargement of their comfort, or strengthening to their faith, above what the former clause presented, but rather that which will he



prejudicial and ensnaring unto both, unless these words, “of the whole world,” be taken in their comprehensive signification, I mean for all men in the world without exception. For to say thus unto a believer, or to a professor of the faith of Christ, who is doubtful about the grounds of his faith, and but weak in the comfort of it, (which was apparently the condition of those to whom John writes this epistle, and in consideration whereof that very clause we now speak of was added to the former,) “Christ is the propitiation for the sins” of the elect, or of some few particular men, must needs rather add to their doubtings than their faith, and augment their fears rather than their comforts ; yea, and would take from rather than add to that ground of consolation, which he had administered in the former clause, “ and he is the propitiation for our sins.” For when I am in suspense, and doubtful in my spirit whether Christ died for me, or he a “propitiation for my sins,” or no, how should it any ways tend or conduce to my establishment, for me to know or consider, that Christ died for his elect, or for some particular men, both of Jews and Gentiles, and for some only? Hath not such a doctrine, or consideration as this, fuel in it to increase the burnings of my fears within me, instead of water to quench or allay them? Or can I be ever a whit the more strengthened to believe that Christ died for me, by believing that he died for some particular men? Or must not my fears in this kind, I mean, whether Christ died for me, or no, needs be the more provoked and enraged within me, by considering, that Christ died for some few particular men only? Or doth such an assertion as this, that Christ died for some particular men, though never so substantially proved, though never so effectually believed, any ways enable, or dispose me to believe, that I am one of those particular men for whom he died? Nay, rather, must not a rumination or feeding upon such a notion, or conception as that, falling in conjunction with the weakness and doubtfulness of my faith, together with the sense and conscience of my many corruptions and infirmities otherwise, of necessity involve and perplex me with so much the more grievous and inextricable fears, that I am none of those particular men, none of those few for whom alone Christ died? Therefore any of those restrained interpretations of “the whole world,” which we have opposed, do most manifestly oppose the plain scope and drift of the Holy Ghost, which was, as hath been proved, the strengthening or encouragement of their faith upon rich and excellent terms; whereas the

true interpretation of the words, and that which we plead, hath the fairest and fullest consistence with such an intent, which can lightly be imagined. For the consideration, that Christ by his death became a propitiation, or made a full atonement for the sins of all men, without exception, as it tends to magnify “the unsearchable riches ” of the grace “ of Christ,” on the one hand, and so is proper to strengthen the hand of every man’s faith; so, on the other hand, it throws down every mountain, and fills every valley, removes all obstructions, takes away all impediments, clears all scruples, and so prepares a plain and smooth way for every man to come unto Christ by believing, yea, and cuts off all occasions of relapses, or faintings in faith afterwards.

How it comes to pass, and how it may well stand with the justice of God, that, notwithstanding the death of Christ for the sins of all men, yet all men are not saved, shall be taken into consideration in due time and place.

Concerning the distinction mentioned, of Christ’s dying sufficiently for all men, hut not efficaciously or intentionally, on God’s part, as it was first hammered out by workmen of no great credit with us for spiritual building, (the schoolmen, I mean,) so is it built upon a false foundation or supposition, as viz. that intentions are attributable unto God upon the same terms in every respect wherein they are competible unto men, the contrary whereof hath been undeniably proved, chap. 3; where likewise it was particularly argued and made good, that God is, and very properly may he, said to intend, whatsoever he vouchsafeth proper and sufficient means to effect, especially with a command to improve or use them accordingly, whether the thing he effected or no. So that to affirm and grant, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, and yet deny that he died intentionally for all men, is to speak contradictions, and to pull down with the left hand what a man hath built up with his right. Certainly he that levyeth and employeth a proportion of means sufficient and proper for the bringing of anything to pass, must needs, in one sense or other, in one degree or other, be supposed to intend the bringing to pass of such a thing. Nor is it any dishonour at all unto God, nor in the least unworthy of him, that he doth not always attain his ends, or things intended by him, no more than it is that sin should be committed in the world, notwithstanding his opposing it by his authority, law, and threatenings, though in strictness and propriety of speech it is most true, that God

never fails of his intentions or ends, if by intentions and ends we mean only such things which are absolutely and positively intended by him. But in this sense the actual salvation of particular men, under any other consideration than as believers, is none of his intentions. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," (not simply or absolutely that the world, *i. e.* every man, nor yet that any man should be saved, or "have everlasting life,") but that "whosoever believeth" should have it. So that the absolute and positive intentions of God concerning the salvation of men, are not concerning the salvation simply of men, or of any man as such, but of believers; and of such intentions as these he never faileth, or suffers disappointment. But of this we spake liberally in the third chapter.

Besides, If Christ died sufficiently for all men, either God intended this sufficiency of his death for or unto all men or not.

If not, then was the glory or sovereign worth of this death of his, besides the intentions of God. God did not intend any such completeness of merit or satisfaction in his death as were in it. But this, I presume, tempteth no man's thoughts or belief. If, then, God did intend the sufficiency of his death for or unto all men, why may it not be said, that he intended his death itself accordingly ? and so, that Christ died intentionally, on God's part, for all men ? The word sufficiently is no terminus diminuens, no term of diminution. Therefore the argument follows roundly: if God intended the sufficiency of Christ's death for all men, then he intended his death itself for all men; and, consequently, Christ died not sufficiently only, but intentionally also for all men. And so the distinction vanisheth.

Thirdly, How can he, who payeth nothing at all for a man, nor intends to pay anything, be notwithstanding said to pay that which is sufficient for him ? Suppose a man be in debt, and in danger of imprisonment for it, can a sufficient payment be said to be made for him, whether anything at all be paid for him, or in order to the keeping of him from imprisonment or no ? When nothing at all is paid for a man that is a great debtor, but that he remains as much a debtor and in as great danger as before, can that which is sufficient or enough for him, or for his discharge, be said to be paid for him, unless, haply, it be in a sense very delusory and deriding, in which sense, doubtless, Christ did not pay any ransom for any man? Suppose a man should pay a great sum of money only for the redeeming of John and Peter, being captives, by which money he might if he had

pleased have ransomed me also, and a thousand more, being in the same condition of captivity with them; can this man, by reason of the payment of such a sum as this upon the terms specified, be said to have paid, that which is sufficient to ransom me? or is that sufficient to ransom me, which was only paid for the ransom of another ?

Fourthly, If there were a sufficiency in the death of Christ for all men, or for the salvation of all men, and God not intend it for all men, but for a few, a number inconsiderable only, then will the death of Christ be found rather matter of dishonour or disparagement unto him, than of honour. Suppose a man were possessed of a very great estate in gold, silver, and other the good things of this life, whereby he is able to relieve the necessities of all his neighbours round about him, who are generally poor, and that to such an extremity that without relief from him they must inevitably perish; in case this man should resolve to relieve only two or three of these indigent persons with this his abundance, and rather throw the rest of it into the midst of the sea, than minister unto any more of them, though they be many thousands, and these every whit as necessitous and as well deserving as the other; would not this great estate, in such a case and upon such terms as these, be a blot rather, and reproach, than an honour or matter of repute to this man, and declare him to be of a very unnatural, ignoble, and inhuman spirit ? In like manner, if God shall have satisfaction, merit, and atonement before him, abundantly sufficient to save the whole world from perishing everlastingly, and shall purpose rather to let it be “like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up,” than dispose of it towards the salvation of any more than only a small handful of men, comparatively, leaving innumerable souls to perish irrecoverably, and without mercy; would not this abundance of merit and satisfaction, upon such an account as this, be, in the eyes of all considerate men, an obscuring veil over the mercy, love, goodness, and bounty of God, and occasion the creature to judge of him, as a God rather envying than desiring the peace and welfare of men? And if God so deeply abhorred the fact of Onan, “in spilling the seed upon the ground, lest he should give seed unto his (deceased) brother,” that he slew him for it, Gen. 38:9, 10, how dare men present him so near unto communion in such a fact, as the spilling, interverting, or non-consigning of the far greater part of the merit of the death of Christ unto men, lest they should be saved, would render him ?

Fifthly, If Christ died sufficiently for all men, and not intentionally, as, viz. not for reprobates, so called, then he died as much for the devils themselves as he did for the greatest part of men. Because his death, in respect of the intrinsical value and worth of it, was sufficient to have redeemed the devils as well as men. Yea, if the sufficiency of the price paid by Christ, be a sufficient ground to bear such a saying as this, that he died sufficiently for all men, he may be said to have died, not only for reprobates as reprobates, and so for unbelievers as unbelievers, (viz. sufficiently) but for the devils also, quatenus devils: inasmuch as there is no defect imaginable in the price we speak of, in respect of the absolute and inherent dignity, value, or worth of it, but that all these, even under the considerations mentioned, might have been redeemed by it as well as the elect. But that Christ died for reprobates as reprobates, and for devils as devils, in one sense or other, were never yet, I conceive, the sayings or thoughts of any man, nor, I suppose, ever will be; certain I am, cannot reasonably be.

Sixthly, and lastly, As yet there hath no sufficient ground been shown, either from the Scriptures, or from principles of reason, for the distinction under contest, nor, I believe, ever will be, or can be. Therefore they who distinguish between Christ's dying for all men, sufficiently and intentionally, opposing the one to the other, affirming the former, and denying the latter, do not only go about to set lambs together by the ears, which will not fight, but also speak things most unworthy of God, and which render him a far greater deluder or derider of his poor creature, man, than a benefactor or well-willer to him, in all his declarations and professions of love unto him, in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ to make his atonement, and procure redemption for him.

Upon consultation had with the premises, with other considerations, haply, of like import, some of the greatest and most learned opposers of universal redemption, Piscator and Beza by name, have stigmatized the aforesaid distinction, (at least that member of it wherein Christ is said to have died sufficiently for all men,) as harsh, barbarous, homonymous; yea, the former of the two as absolutely false. "That expression," saith Beza, "Christ died for the sins of all men, sufficiently, but not efficaciously, though in *at* rectified sense it be true, yet is it extremely harsh, and no less ambiguous than barbarous. For the particle *for* imports either the counsel of the Father, according to which Christ

suffered, or else the effect itself of his sufferings, or rather both; whereas neither of them belong to any but the elect.” Piscator to his antagonist, thus: “The proposition laid down is false, viz. that Christ died sufficiently for every particular or single man; this is thy assertion. For Christ died most sufficiently for the elect, paying the price of their redemption, I mean his precious blood, that blood of the Son of God. But for reprobates Christ died neither in one kind nor other, *neither sufficiently* nor efficaciously.”

## CHAPTER 6.

**Wherein several texts of the second sort of Scriptures propounded Chap. 5, as holding forth the Universality of Redemption, by Christ, are discussed.**

THE first of these Scriptures there mentioned was this: "Who gave himself a ransom for all," or for all men, "to be testified in due time," 1 Tim. 2:6. Let the context adjoining to this Scripture be narrowly sifted, and then, if we shall but grant that the apostle speaks either sap, sense, savour, or anything congruous to the judgments or understandings of men, we shall not be able to deny but that it carries the doctrine asserted with a high hand of evidence in it. Evident it is, that the apostle in this verse goes on with the confirmation or further proof of that reason of his, laid down verse 4, for the making good what he had said verse 3. That which he had said in this third verse is this: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of *God* our Saviour." This is good, meaning the performance of that duty whereunto he had exhorted verses 1 and 2, viz., that "Supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks, should be made for *all* men, for kings, and for all that are in authority," &c. Now then, most evident it is, that by *all* men, in this first verse, for whom prayers, &c. are to be made unto God, is not meant some of *all* sorts of men, nor yet *all* the elect or the like, but *all* of *all* sorts of men whatsoever, except haply those who have barred up the way of our prayers for them, by that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, as John intimates, 1 John 5:16. For that which followeth verse 2 clearly evinceth it; "For kings, and for all in authority." Certainly if this be good and acceptable in the sight of *God*, that we should pray for *all* of one sort or degree of men in the world, especially for *all* in authority, (in which sort or rank of men there are many as unworthy and incapable of our prayers as-in any other,) it is good and acceptable in his sight likewise, that we should pray for *all* in *all* other ranks or sorts of men whatsoever. For there is nothing imaginable to cause a difference in this point. So then, to prove that it is "good and acceptable in the sight of *God* to pray for all men," without exception, the apostle layeth down this ground, verse 4: "That God will have *all* men to be saved." If now by *all* men in

this reason we shall understand only some of *all* sorts of men, or *all* the elect only, we shall shorten the arm of the apostle's argument so far that it will not reach half way towards that conclusion, for the proof whereof it is brought, and so shall make him reason very weakly, and, indeed, ridiculously, as, viz., after this manner: "It is good and acceptable in the sight of *God* that we should pray universally for *all* men, without exception of any, because God will have all his elect to be saved, or some out of every sort of men." There is little savour of an argument in this; whereas the rationality and strength of the apostle's arguing, rightly understood, is pregnant and full of conviction. "It is good and acceptable in the sight of God" that we should pray for *all* men, without exception, because his will is to have *all* men, without exception, saved. The strength of this argument lieth in this ground, or clear principle in reason, viz., that a conformity unto his own will, in the will and endeavours of men, is, and must needs be, "good and acceptable in the sight of God." Now then to prove that God's will is, that *all* men without exception, should be saved, the apostle brings this reason, in the words in hand, viz., that "Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for *all* men." So that GREEK, *all* men here, in this reason, must of necessity be of the same extent, with the same word in the doctrine or conclusion which was to be proved; otherwise we shall make the apostle stumble at that stone in arguing, at which only novices, or lyers-in-wait to deceive, are wont to stumble, as viz., when there is more put into the conclusion than into the premises. That which here lay upon the apostle's hand to prove, was, as hath been undeniably evicted, that God's will is to have *all* men, without exception, saved. Now, to prove this by such an argument or assertion as this, that Christ gave himself a ransom either for *all* his elect, or for some of *all* sorts of men, or for some as well Gentiles as Jews, and for no others, is as if I should undertake to prove the bountifulness of a prince towards all his subjects, being many, by such an argument as this, that he sent by a special servant of his very great rewards to two or three of them, but resolved to do nothing at all for any more of them. Therefore, universality of redemption by Christ is the most unquestionable doctrine of the apostle in this Scripture.

The next specified in the said catalogue or inventory, was, "Because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead ; and that he died for *all*, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but



unto him who died for them, and rose again,” 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. We see the apostle’s judgment here is very clear, that Christ died for *all*; he once clearly supposeth it ;

“if one died for *all*,” *i. e.*, since one died for *all*, the particle *if*, being ratiocinantis, not dubitantis, as in twenty places besides, meaning Christ; and once plainly asserteth it, “ and that he died for *all*,” *i. e.* we also judge that he died for *all*. That which is commonly given in by way of answer to this and other Scriptures, both of the former and latter import, by those who look another way in the controversy in hand, is not much considerable. But that winch it is, is this: they pretend that both the word “world” and such terms of universality as these, “all,” “all men,” “every man,” &c., in many places of Scripture used, and accordingly are to be taken, and understood in a restrained signification; as sometimes for many or greater numbers of men; sometimes for some of all sorts; sometimes for Jews and Gentiles, or the like. From whence they would infer, that therefore such terms and expressions as these are in the Scripture in hand, and in the others formerly cited for our purpose, to be taken in some of these limited significations ; and not in the rigour or extent of what they properly signify, as *viz.*, for an absolute and unlimited universality of men. For to this we answer,

1. By way of concession, most true it is, that these notes or terms of universality, “all,” “ all men,” “ every man,” &c., are in. many places of Scripture necessarily to be taken in some such limited and restrained signification as is affirmed. But then,

2. I answer further, by way of exception, four things:

- (1.) That neither the terms we speak of, nor any other words or expressions in Scripture, are in any other case, or upon any other pretence whatsoever, to be taken out of their proper and best-known significations, but only when the tenor of the context or some circumstance of the place doth necessitate and enforce such a construction of them. Now, evident it is, by what hath been formerly argued upon the Scriptures alleged, that there is no necessity at all in respect of any the respective contexts, nor of any circumstance in any of them, to understand the said terms of universality any otherwise than in their most proper, *i. e.* in their most extensive and comprehensive significations.

- (2.) That which is more than this, we have evidently proved that the

very tenor of the several contexts wherein the aforesaid places are found, doth absolutely enforce and necessitate us unto such a proper and comprehensive signification of the said terms of universality, as hath been contended for: so that there can be no reasonable, regular, or grammatical sense or construction made of those places, unless such a sense of these terms be admitted.

(3.) To reason thus, These, or these words or terms, are to be taken in this or in that sense in such and such places of Scripture ; therefore they must or they may be taken in the same sense in such and such other places of Scripture, is to reason ourselves into a thousand errors and absurdities: as for example, evident it is, that in that Scripture, John 18:16, where it is said that Peter stood at the door, by the word *door* is meant a door of wood or some such material; but it would be ridiculously erroneous to infer from hence that therefore it is to be taken, and may be taken, in the same sense in John 10:9, where Christ saith, “I am the door.” So again, when Paul saith that Christ sent him “to the gentiles to open their eyes,” Acts 26:18, evident it is, that by the word *eyes* he means their inward eyes, their minds, judgments, and understandings; but from hence to conclude that therefore when David saith that “the idols which men make have eyes,” Psal. 116:5, the word *eyes* is to be understood or may be understood here also in the same sense, is to conclude that which common sense itself abhorreth. So that the weakness of all such arguings or pleadings as this—“All,” “all men,” “every man,” are in these and these places of Scripture to be taken in a limited sense, for some of all sorts of men, for Jews and Gentiles, or the like, therefore they are to be taken in the same sense in all others where they are found—is notorious and most unworthy of considering men. Though, whilst a man is a prisoner, he cannot go whither he desires, but must be content with the narrow bounds of his prison; it doth not follow from hence, that therefore, when he is discharged and set at liberty, he must needs continue in his prison still, especially when his necessary occasions call him to another place, whither also he hath a desire otherwise to go.

We have, as concerning the former Scripture, evidently proved that the terms “*all men*” must be of necessity taken in their most proper, free, and unlimited significations; and shall, God assisting, demonstrate the same in those yet remaining. Let us at present, because the place in hand is pregnant and full to our purpose, evince, above all contradiction, that the

words “*all*,” or “*all men*,” in it cannot, with the honour of St. Paul’s intellectuals, be understood otherwise. “Because we thus judge,” saith he, “that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead: and that he died for *all*, that they who live,” &c. Observe that clause of distribution, “that they who live.” “We judge that Christ died for *all*, that they who live,” *i. e.* that all they, without exception, who recover, and are, or shall be delivered from this death by Christ for them, “should not live,” &c. So then, if by the word “*all*” or “*all men*,” for whom the apostle here judgeth or concludeth that Christ died, we shall understand the universality of the elect only, “for *all men*,” *i. e.* for *all* the elect, and for these only, we shall grievously misfigure the fair face of a worthy sentence, and render it incongruous and inconsistent with all rules and principles of discourse: for then the tenor of it must rise and run thus: We judge that Christ died for all the elect, that all the elect who shall live and be recovered from death by Christ, should not live, *See*. Doth not the ears of every man’s reason, yea, of common sense itself, taste an uncouthness and unsavouriness of sound in such a texture of words as this? Yea, doth not such a carriage of the place clearly imply that there are or may be some of the elect themselves who shall not live or be restored from death by Christ, and consequently shall not be bound upon any such engagement to live unto him? Doubtless, if by the word *all* the apostle had meant *all* the elect, and these only, he would not have added, “that they who live,” but rather, that they or these might live: for these words, “that they who live,” clearly import a possibility at least, yea, a futurity also, *i. e.* that it would so come to pass, that some of those *all*, for whom Christ died, would not live, and consequently would be in no capacity of living from themselves to live unto him. The uncouthness and senselessness of such interpretations as these was somewhat more at large argued in the next preceding chapter; but now let us take the word GREEK, *all*, in the proper and due signification of it, *viz.* for the generality or universality of men, the sense will run clear, and have a savoury and sweet relish with it: “Because we thus judge,” *i. e.* upon clear grounds and principles of reason, argue and conclude, “that if one died for all men, then were all men dead *i. e.* obnoxious unto death, dead in law, as good as dead, otherwise they should not have had any need that another should die for their preservation; “and that he died for all men,” *i. e.* we further also judge and conclude that he died for all men, with this intent or for this end

amongst others, “ that they who live,” *i. e.* that whosoever of those, for whom he thus died, shall be saved by this death of his for them, “ should,” in consideration of, and by way of signal thankfulness for such a salvation, “ not live into themselves,” *i. e.* only or chiefly mind themselves whilst they live in the world, in their carnal and worldly interests, “ but unto him who died for them and rose again,” *i. e.* promote his interest and affairs in the world, who so notably engaged them hereunto by dying for them, and, by resuming his life and being after his death, is become capable of their love and service to him in this kind. In such a carriage of the place as this, there is spirit and life, evidence of reason, commodiousness of sense, regularity of construction, no forcing or straining of words or phrases, or the like; whereas, in any such expositions which contract the signification of the word GREEK, *all* men, either to the elect, or to any lesser number of men than *all*, there will be found an universal disturbance in the sentence, nothing orderly, smooth, or clear. By the way, the apostle in saying that Christ died for all men, that they who live should not live unto themselves, &c., doth not intend to confine the duty of thankfulness for Christ’s death only unto the saints, or those that are put into an estate of salvation By it, as if wicked men and unbelievers owed him no service at all upon that account; but only shows, that Christ expects or looks for no such denial of themselves for his sake at the hands of any, but of theirs only who come actually to taste and partake of the great benefit and blessing of his death. Thus then we see, that the word “*all*” or “*all* men,” though in some place or places it may, yea, of necessity must signify only some men, or some parts of all men, yet in others, and particularly in those two lately insisted upon, it must with the like necessity signify *all* men without exception.

4. And lastly, for the word “world,” which was the term of contention in the former head of Scriptures, though I deny not, but that in some places it signifies only some part of men in the world, and not the entire universality of men, as Luke 2:1; Acts 19:27, and frequently elsewhere; yet that it anywhere signifies precisely that part of the world which the Scripture calls the elect, I absolutely deny, neither hath it yet been, nor, I believe, ever will be proved ; and the rather, because the Holy Ghost delights still, as some instances have been given in Chap. 5., and more might be added without number, to express that part or party of men in the world, which is contrary unto the saints, and which are strangers and

enemies unto God, by “the world,” This by way of answer to that exception or pretence against the exposition given of the Scriptures alleged, viz. that the word “world,” and those general terms *all* and every man, are sometimes used in a restrained signification.

Concerning the exposition given of the Scripture last argued, were it not clear and pregnant enough by the light wherein it hath been presented, further countenance might be given unto it, by showing what friends it hath amongst our best and most approved authors. Among the ancients, Chrysostom is generally esteemed, and that worthily, the best interpreter of the Scriptures. His sense of the place under debate is plainly enough the same with ours. “For,” saith he, writing upon the place, “He (meaning Christ) had not died, or would not have died, for all, had not all died or been dead.” In which words he clearly supposeth, that Christ died for as many as were dead, and consequently for *all*, without exception, inasmuch as *all*, without exception or difference, were dead. A little after, thus : “for it argueth an excess of much love, both to die for so *great a world*, and to die for it being so affected or disposed as it was.” Amongst our later divines, Musculus is not the least, if not equal to the greatest. Yet he also gives the right-hand of fellowship to the interpretation given upon the place. “But Christ,” saith he, “died not only for his friends, hut for his enemies also; not for some men only, but for all, without exception. This is the unmeasurable or vast extent of the love of God.” But the cause we plead needs no such advocates as these, being potent enough with its own evidence and equity, and therefore we shall retain no more of them.

A third text of Scripture presented upon the same account with the former, was, “ that he by the grace of God should, taste death, GREEK, for every man,” Heb. 2:9. This clause importeth that universality of atonement made by the death of Christ, which we maintain more significantly, if more may be, and with less liableness to any evasion or shift, than any of the former, places engaged in the warfare. To show that the Lord Christ, though clothed with a body of flesh, wherein he was capable of dying as well as other men, yet did not suffer death simply through the malice or power of his enemies, but upon an account far superior to these. The apostle attributes his death to the grace of God, i. e. the love and gracious affections of God, not towards some, or a few, no, nor yet towards all men collectively taken or in the lump but towards all

men distributively taken, i. e. towards every particular and individual man. "GREEK" saith the Holy Ghost, " for every man;" i.e. to procure eternal redemption and salvation, for every man, without the exclusion of any. I cannot apprehend what can reasonably be said to alienate the mind or import of this Scripture from our present cause. Evident it is, and you shall find, our best interpreters of the place affirming the same, that the apostle in these words, "that through the grace of God he might taste death," &c., assigns a reason, or two rather, of what he had said a little before concerning the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ, whom he had in the former chapter asserted to be the Son. of God, to prevent or heal any scandal or offence that either had already, or might afterwards arise in the minds of these Hebrews, through the unlikelihood, strangeness, or incredibleness of such a thing. It is a saying among philosophers, and all men have experience, in part, of truth in it, that a knowledge of the reasons or causes of things causeth admiration, and so all troublesomeness of thoughts about them to cease. So then, the apostle's drift and intent in these words mentioned, being to satisfy the Hebrews concerning such a strange, wonderful, and unheard of thing, as,

- 1 That the Son of God should be made man; and,
2. That being made man, he should suffer death; it is no ways credible but that he should,

1. Assign such a cause as would carry the greatest weight of satisfaction in it; and
2. Express himself in such perspicuity and plainness of words, that they might not lightly mistake his meaning, lest if by occasion of his words they should first apprehend the reason or cause assigned by him, to be more weighty or considerable than he intended it, and afterwards should come to understand that it was far lighter and less considerable ; their scandal and offence, instead of being healed Or prevented, would be more strengthened and increased, as usually it comes to pass in such cases. Now, evident it is,

1. That the apostle's words in this place, "That He, through the grace of God, should taste death for every man," in the plainest, the most obvious and direct sense and signification of them, hold forth the doctrine which we maintain for truth, here being no restraint at all, nor the least whispering of any limitation to be put upon that term of universality, GREEK, every man; and
2. As evident it is, that the death of Christ for all men, without the exception of any, which is the doctrine we assert, and the grace of God so intending it, amount to a far more weighty consideration and satisfaction, touching those great

dispensations spoken of, (the incarnation and humiliation of the Son of God,) than his dying only for a few, or for a select number of men, and the grace of God commensurable hereunto. Therefore there is not the least question to be made, but that the large, and not the limited sense, was the apostle's sense in the words now under debate. And when the Holy Ghost expresseth himself, as we have heard, "That he, through the grace of God, should taste death *for every man* for any man to come and interpret thus, for every man, *i. e.* for some men, or for a few men, which, if not for form, yet for matter and substance must be their interpretation who oppose the exposition given, is not to interpret, but to correct, and to exercise a magisterial authority over the Scriptures.

Nor had Pareus himself the heart to decline the interpretation asserted, though he seems somewhat desirous by some expressions, to hide this his ingenuity from his fellows, to avoid their offence, "Whereas," saith he, "the apostle saith, for every man, it respects the amplification, or extent, of the death of Christ. *He died not for some few*; the efficacy, or virtue, of it appertains unto ALL. Therefore there is life prepared," (or made ready,) "in the death of Christ, for ALL afflicted consciences," &c. The truth is, that there can be no solid ground of peace or comfort to any afflicted conscience whatsoever, without the supposal of Christ's death for every man, without exception, as hath been argued in part, page 153, &c. of the former chapter; and might be further evicted above all contradiction. Amongst the orthodox fathers, Chrysostom, who, as we heard, avouched the exposition given of the former Scripture, stands by his own judgment and mine, in his explication of this. "That he, through the grace of God, should taste death for every man; not only," saith he, "for the faithful, or those that believe, but for *all the world*. He indeed died for ALL men. For what if all men do not believe ? yet he hath done his part," or fully performed that which was proper for him to do.

The Scripture next advancing in the fore-mentioned troop was, "Who will have all men to be saved," (speaking of God,) "and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. 2:4. Whereunto (for conformity in import) we shall join the last there specified, which is this: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise," (as some men count slackness,) "but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Pet. 3:9. Concerning the former of these places, we clearly evinced, in page 158 of this chapter, from the

unquestionable tenor and carriage of the whole context, that by “all men,” cannot possibly be understood, either some of all sorts of men, or Jews and Gentiles, or all the elect, or the like; but of necessity, all of all sorts of men, simply and universally, without the exception, of any, whether Jews or Gentiles. Any other interpretation or sense of the words, GREEK, all men, but this, renders the apostle palpably impertinent and weak (that I say not ridiculous) in his arguing in this place. This I plainly demonstrate in the place above cited: I now add, that if it be said that God will have all men to be saved, because he will have some of all sorts of men to be saved; it may more properly and truly be said of him, that he will have all men to be destroyed, at least in their sense, who hold an irreversible reprobation of persons personally considered, from eternity, because not simply some, but a very great part of all sorts of men, now extant in the world, will in time perish, and that according to the decree or will of God; the tenor whereof is, that all persons dying in impenitency and unbelief shall perish. Yet the Scriptures do nowhere say upon any such account as this, either in terminis, or in substance, that God will have all men to perish, and not to come to the knowledge of the truth. Which is somewhat more than a topic argument, that God is not therefore said to will that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, only because he will have some, some few of all sorts of men to be saved, and come to this knowledge : but simply because his will is to have all men, without exception, (viz., as they are men, and whilst they are yet capable of repentance,) to be saved, and in order thereunto to come to the knowledge of the saving truth, i. e. the gospel. Nor doth it follow, that the will of God is changeable, in case he should will the same man as this day to be saved, and so on the morrow to perish, but only that such a man is changeable, as we shall further show, God willing, in due time. Now then, if it be the will of God to have all men, without exception, saved, &c., most certain it is that Christ died, and intentionally on God’s part, for all men, without exception; because it is not imaginable that God should be willing to have those saved for whom he was unwilling that salvation should be procured.

The latter of the two Scriptures lately brought upon the theatre of our present discourse, acts the same part with the former. There it is said of the Lord (Christ) that he is not “willing that *any* should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance.” If so, then certainly there neither was,



nor is, nor ever shall be any, for whom Christ was not willing, did not intend, to die, and to purchase repentance. So that his death was intentionally for all men, as well in respect of himself, as of God the Father. Besides those slimy evasions and shifts of making bondmen of Christ's freemen, I mean of an arbitrary and importune confining the expressions importing a simple and absolute universality, in such Scriptures as these, to petty universalities, as of the elect, of species, sorts, or kinds of men, &c., (the nakedness whereof hath been detected over and over,) our adversaries in the cause in hand are wont to take sanctuary from such Scriptures as the two now in debate, under the wing of this distinction. "It is true," say they, "God wills that all men should be saved, and so that all should come to repentance, voluntate signi, with his signified or revealed will; but this doth not prove but that voluntate beneplaciti, with the will of his pleasure, or purpose, he may be willing that many, even far the greatest part of men, should perish." But to show the vanity, or at least the impertinency of this distinction to the business in hand:

1. I would demand of those who lean upon the broken reed of this distinction, in opposition to the clear and distinct sense given of the two Scriptures last mentioned, what they mean by their voluntas signi, the signified or revealed will of God; and wherein the opposition or difference lieth between this and that other will of God, which they term the will of his good pleasure or purpose? If by his signified or revealed will, they mean only the precepts or commandments of God concerning such and such duties, which God would have practised and done by men, (which is all the account that some of the greatest opposers in the point in hand give of it,) I do not understand how, or in what respect, God can be said to will the salvation of all men, or that none should perish. For, 1. Salvation actively taken, is an act of God himself, not of men; and consequently cannot be said to be a duty enjoined by him unto men, and therefore not to be willed neither by him, by way of precept or command. 2. Salvation, passively taken, is not an act, but a state or condition; and consequently is no matter of duty; and so cannot be said to be willed by God in such a sense.

If by the signified or revealed will of God, in the distinction now under canvass, be meant the declaration which he hath made in his word concerning the final or eventual salvation or condemnation of men,

evident it is, that neither in this sense can he be said to will the salvation of all men; because he hath declared and signified unto the world that few comparatively will or shall in fine be saved.

If it he pleaded, that in this sense God may be said to will the salvation of all men with his signified or revealed will, because he enjoins faith and repentance unto all men, which are the means of salvation; and he that enjoins the means, may, in. *a*, consequential way, he said to enjoin the end in the same injunction, I answer,

1. If God enjoins faith and repentance unto all men, it argues that he preacheth the gospel unto all men; and consequently, that they who have not the letter of the gospel preached, unto them, by books or men, as many heathen nations have not at this day, yet have the spirit, substance, and effect of the gospel preached to them otherwise, as, viz. by the creation and gracious government of the world, which is, as I have shown elsewhere, purely evangelical and corresponding with the Scriptures. But how this will stand with our adversaries' judgment in the case depending, I understand not.

2. It is the sense of one of the greatest patrons of the adverse cause, that "the precept or injunction of God is not properly the will of God; because," saith he, "he doth not hereby so much signify what himself willeth to be done, as what is our duty to do."

I confess that no signification whatsoever, whether of what a man willeth or decreeth to be done, or of what is the duty of another to do, can properly be said to be the will of the signifier ; but yet that will, wherewith or out of which God willeth or commandeth. us to do that which is our duty to do, is as properly his will as that whereby he willeth or decreeth things to be done. My will or desire that my child should obey me, or that he should prosper in the world, is as properly my will as that whereby I will or purpose to show the respects of a father unto him in providing for him; being as proper, natural, and direct an act of that principle or faculty of willing within me whereby I will the former, as that act itself of this faculty wherein I will the latter is: for the principle or faculty within me of willing, how numerous or different soever the acts of willing which I exert by virtue of this faculty may be, is but one and the same ; and this faculty being natural, there can be no such difference between the acts proceeding from, it which should make some to be more proper and others less, though some may be better and others worse. But this

difference can have no place in the acts of the will of God; therefore, if the precept or preceptive will of God be not properly his will, neither can any other will of his, or any other act of his will, be properly such. If so, then that will of God, or act of will in God, whereby he willeth or enjoineth faith and repentance, and consequently salvation, unto all men, is as properly his will as that whereby he willeth the salvation of any man. Therefore, if there be any secret or unrevealed will in God, whereby he willeth the destruction of any man at the same time when he willeth the salvation of all men, (be it with what kind of will soever,) these two wills must needs interfere and contradict the one the other. Nor will that distinction of the late-mentioned author save a consistency between them, wherein he distinguisheth between the decree of God and the thing decreed by him, affirming that “the thing which God decreeth may be repugnant to or inconsistent with the thing which he commandeth, though the decree itself cannot be repugnant to the command.” The vanity of this distinction clearly appeareth upon this common ground, viz. that acts are differenced and distinguished by their objects: therefore, if the object of God’s decreeing will, or the thing decreed by him, be contrary to the thing preceptively willed or commanded by him, impossible it is but that the two acts of his will, by the one of which he is supposed to will the one, and by the other the other, should digladiate and one fight against the other: therefore, certainly, there is no such pair or combination of wills in God as the distinction of *voluntas signi* and *beneplaciti* (as applied in the question in hand) doth suppose. It is impossible that I should inwardly and seriously will or desire the death of my child, and yet at the same time seriously also will and enjoin the physician to do his best to recover him.

Again, if God enjoin faith and repentance unto all men, with a declaration that he enjoineth them in order to their salvation, or with a promise that, upon their obedience to this injunction of his, they shall be actually saved, then can he not at the same time will with a secret will the condemnation of any. But most evident it is, that unto whomsoever he enjoineth faith or repentance, he enjoineth them in order to their salvation, and with promise of actual salvation upon their obedience to this injunction, Matt. 16:16; Acts 3:19; John 20:31, &c. Therefore, impossible it is, that he should secretly intend, will, or purpose the destruction of any to whom he enjoins faith and repentance. The

consequence in this argument is so rich in evidence, that it needs no proof. If a prince should inwardly and resolvedly determine to put such or such a malefactor to death, and yet by proclamation or otherwise promise him his life or a pardon upon condition he would reform his course, would this be a strain of divine perfection, or like unto one of the ways of God ?

There is a sense, I confess, wherein the distinction now in consideration may be admitted. If by the signified or revealed will of God be meant nothing else but such declarations or manifestations made by God, which, when made by men, are signs of a will, purpose, or desire in them, suitable to their respective tenors and imports, (which is clearly their sense of this member of the distinction, who were the first coiners of it, I mean the schoolmen,) there is no inconvenience in granting a revealed will in God distinguished, from or opposed unto a will of good pleasure or of purpose in him. This sense makes no opposition of wills in God, nor yet between things willed or purposed by him; but only sheweth or supposeth that the will and good pleasure in God extendeth not to the actual procurement of obedience from men unto all those laws or commands which he judgeth meet to impose upon them; or, which is the same, that God hath not positively decreed that all men shall, or shall be necessitated by him to live in subjection to all those laws which he hath appointed unto them. This sense is orthodox, and blameable, but holds no intelligence with that opinion which supposeth one will in God, according unto which he willeth all men to be saved; and another, according unto which he willeth the far greatest part of men to be damned, and both antecedent. For otherwise, two such wills as these are fairly and clearly enough consistent in him. God, according to the distinction of the will of God into antecedent and consequent, first set on foot by some of the fathers, Chrysostom, and Damascen by name, and since made use of by the schoolmen, may, with the former, be said to will the salvation of all men; and yet with the latter be said also, in a sense, to will the condemnation of far the greatest part of them. His antecedent will, the distinction being admitted as it ought to be, having so clear a foundation in Scripture, respecteth men simply as men ; his consequent will relateth to them as considerable under the two opposite qualifications, or immediate capacities of life and death, or of salvation and condemnation; the one of these being- faith persevered in unto

death, the other, final impenitency or unbelief. According to the former of these wills, God is said to will the salvation of all men, partly because he vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men whereby to be saved ; partly also, because he hath passed no decree against any man which either formally, or consequentially, or in any consideration whatsoever excludeth any man, personally considered, from salvation before he voluntarily excludeth himself by such sinful miscarriages and deportments, which, according to the revealed will of God, render him utterly incapable thereof. According to the latter of these wills, as he peremptorily willeth the salvation of all those who are faithful unto death; so doth he as peremptorily will the condemnation of all those who shall not be found in the faith of Jesus Christ at their end. The latter, through their own deplorable and voluntary carelessness and negligence, proving to be in number far the greater part of men, God, upon this supposition, and in a consequential way, may be said to will the condemnation of the greatest part of men, and the salvation only of a few, comparatively. But of these things more hereafter.

In the meantime, evident it is from the Scriptures argued, that Christ died intentionally for all men, without exception, considered as men; and that there was nothing more procured, nor intended to be procured, thereby for one man than another, personally considered, or simply as men. Only this was intended in this death of Christ, in the general, that whosoever, whether few or whether many, should with a true and persevering faith believe in him, should actually partake of the benefit and blessing of this his death in the great reward of salvation ; and on the other hand, that whosoever, whether few or whether many, should not believe in him with such a faith, should, upon this account, be excluded from all participation in the great blessing of salvation purchased by his death, notwithstanding the purchase was as much made, and intended to be made for them as for those who come actually to inherit; even as the marriage feast in the parable was as much provided, prepared, and intended for those, who upon their invitation came not, as it was for those who came and actually partook of it; unless we shall say that the king who made this feast intended it not for those whom, notwithstanding, he solemnly invited to it, and with whom he was highly displeased for their refusal to come, being invited, Matt. 22:3, 4, &c. And that the death of Christ, and the gracious intentions of God therein, did, and do equally

and uniformly respect all men, is abundantly manifest from that declaration made by the Lord Christ himself on this behalf, formerly opened; “So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John 3:16. Those words, “that whosoever believeth on him should not perish,” &c., evidently import indifferenced and impartial intentions on God’s part towards men in the gift of his Son.

The last Scripture of the division yet in hand was this, “Therefore as by the offence of one, the judgment came upon all men *to* condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men* unto the justification of life,” Rom. 5:18. Evident it is, that the apostle in this passage compareth the extent of the condemnation which came by the sin of Adam, with the extent of the grace of justification which came by Christ, in respect of the numbers of persons unto whom they extended respectively, and finds them in this point commensurable the one unto the other. The persons upon whom the gift of justification cometh by Christ, are made equal in number unto those upon whom the judgment of condemnation came by Adam. For as the offence of Adam is here said to have come upon *all men* unto condemnation, so also is the gift of justification of life, *i. e.* of such a justification upon which, and by means whereof, men are saved, which comes by Jesus Christ, said to come *upon all men* likewise. Now to say, that *all men* in the former clause is to be taken properly and signifies *all men*, indeed, without exception of any, which all expositors grant without exception of any, but in the latter improperly and with limitation, yea, with such a limitation, which comparatively, and a few only excepted, excludes *all men*, there being not the least ground, or reason in the context to vary the signification of the words, or to make them to signify more in the one clause and fewer in the other, is to exercise an arbitrary dominion over the expressions of the Holy Ghost, and to invent and set up significations and senses of words at pleasure. Nor doth it at all ease the matter, to say or prove, that in other places of Scripture this word GREEK, all men, signifies not all without exception, but only a great number, or all of one particular sort or kind of persons; because,

1. If it can be proved that in other places of Scripture it so signifies, I mean not all without exception, but only some greater number or numbers of men, it seems then there is a reason why it should or must so

signify in these places ; otherwise, it could, not be proved that there it so signifies. But here is no reason at all to be given why it should be taken out of the proper and native signification, or signify any lesser number than all men simply. Now to refuse the proper signification of a word, where there is no other reason why it should be refused, but only because it is to be refused where there is a reason, and so a necessity, to refuse it, is as if one should persuade a man that is hungry to forbear meat whilst he may have it, because he must forbear it when he cannot get it. "When the context or subject matter doth require a by, less proper or limited signification of a word or phrase, this signification is put upon them by God. But when there is no occasion or necessity, either in respect of the one or of the other, why such a signification should be put upon them, now if it be done, the doing of it is arbitrary, and from the lawless presumption of men. How much more when men shall do it, not only without any sufficient ground or reason, but against reason? which is the case of those, who all men in the latter clause of the verse in hand, will needs understand only some men, and these but few comparatively. For,

2. Though one and the same word or phrase, is sometimes to be taken in a different signification in one and the same period or sentence, as elsewhere is observed, yet this is nowhere to be done, but where there is manifest and pregnant reason for the doing of it, as in these and the like cases. "Let the *dead* bury their *dead*," Mat. 8:22. So again, "Whosoever drinketh of this *water* shall thirst again; but whosoever shall drink of the *water* that I shall give him, shall never thirst more," John 4:13, 14. There is a plain reason why by the "dead," in the end of the former of these places, should be meant such as were naturally or corporally dead, viz. because such only are to be buried with that kind of burial, whereof our Saviour had occasion to speak, as appears from the former verse. Again, why by "the dead" in the beginning of the said passage, should be meant those that are spiritually dead, and not those that are corporally dead, there is this reason, every whit as plain as the former, viz. because those that are naturally or corporally dead, are not capable of burying those that are dead, either with one kind of burial or other. So why the word "*water*," in the latter of the passages mentioned, should in the first place signify material or elementary water; in the latter, spiritual water or the Holy Ghost, reasons are obvious and near at hand; we shall not need to name them. But why the words, GREEK, all men, in the place of the

apostle under debate, being twice used, should be conceived so far to vary in their significations as in the former clause, to signify all men without exception; in the latter, very few men, no like reason, nor indeed any competent, can be given.

3. Though “all men” doth in some places signify only a greater number of men, not all men simply or universally, yet it never signifieth a small number of men, either in opposition to or in comparison with a greater, least of all with the greatest number that is, as they must make it signify in the Scripture in hand, who will have no more signified by it, in the latter of the two clauses where it is used, than only those who come in time to be actually saved by Christ. For these are a very small number, “Few there be,” saith Christ, “that find it,” speaking of the strait gate which leadeth unto life, in comparison of those upon whom condemnation came by Adam.

4. If condemnation should come upon all men simply by the offence of Adam, and righteousness only upon some men, and these but a few neither, comparatively, by the obedience and gift of Christ, then where sin abounded, grace should not superabound, as the apostle saith it did; nay, sin should superabound, and grace be confined to a narrow compass, comparatively. To say that the superabounding of grace above sin here spoken of, is to be considered in the intensiveness of it, *i. e.* in its prevalency over sin where it is vouchsafed, not in the extensiveness of it, as if it extended to more persons, is thus far acknowledged for a saying of truth. Grace doth not extend to more persons than sin, at least not to more persons of men, because sin extendeth unto all, and grace cannot extend to more than all. But if we shall straiten and limit grace in respect of the extent of it, to a small number of persons, as *viz.* unto those only who are or shall be actually saved, the glory of the superabounding of grace above sin in respect of the prevalency of it, where it is in such a sense given, will be fully matched or rather overcome and swallowed up by the prevailing extensiveness of sin above grace.

5. The apostle, both before and after, as *viz.* verses 15 and 19, computeth the condemned ones of Adam and the justified ones of Christ, by one and the same numerical expression. He tells us in both places of many dead by Adam, and of no fewer than many justified and redeemed by Christ. Now what the Holy Ghost makes equal for men to disequalize, especially to such a proportion or degree that the one number shall be



inconsiderable, and as nothing in comparison of the other, is to lift up themselves above their line, and so take hold of vanity instead of truth. The apostle's expression, verse 15, is somewhat more emphatical, "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." If it shall be supposed that many more millions of men are dead through the offence of Adam, than are justified or made alive by the grace of God in Christ, Paul's glorying over the grace of God in Christ, as much more abounding to the justification of many, must fall to the ground. For, if by the offence of Adam all became dead, and a few only be made alive by the gift of the grace of God in Christ, who will not judge hut that the offence of one much more abounded to the death of many, than the grace of *God* to the justification or life of many?

6. And lastly, the apostle having said, verse 20, that "Where sin abounded, grace superabounded he adds, verse 21, "that as sin hath reigned unto death, so did grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, evident it is from verses 14 and 12, that sin reigned over all men, without exception, unto death; therefore, grace must have a proportionable reign unto life, *i. e.* must by a strong and overruling hand put all men into a capacity or estate of life and salvation. It so, it undeniably follows that Christ died for all men, without exception for any, because otherwise all men could not be put into an estate of grace or salvation by Him.

Nor was this interpretation counted either heretical or erroneous by the most orthodox expositors of old. Chrysostom himself commenting upon the place, makes the apostle to speak thus, "If all men were punished through the offence," (or his offence, meaning Adam's,) "they" (*i.e.* these all men) "may doubtless be justified from hence;" (*i. e.* by that overabundance of grace and righteousness as he there speaketh, which is given in Christ.) The former part of his commentary is more full and pregnant to this purpose, but because the transcription would be somewhat long, I leave it to be read in the author himself. Nor are there wanting amongst our late reformed divines, surnamed orthodox, men of eminent learning, piety and worth, who subscribe the said interpretation. "That our reparation," (restoration,) saith Mr. Bucer upon the place, "is made by Christ, and that it is more efficacious than the sin of Adam, and that it is of *larger extent*, is that which the apostle argueth in this and the

following section. Again, upon those words, “Sed non ut GREEK,” and thus : “ The apostle here meaneth, that the grace of Christ did more profit mankind, than the sin of Adam damnified it.” Doubtless, if all men, without exception, were brought into a condition of misery by the sin of Adam, and but a handful only, in comparison, made happy by the grace of Christ; the grace of Christ cannot be said to have profited mankind more than the sin of Adam damnified it. Yet again, upon verse 16, “For whereas the world was lost” (or undone) “by the one sin of Adam, the grace of Christ did not only abolish this sin, and that death which it brought,” (upon the world,) “ but likewise took away an infinite number of other sins, which we, the rest of men, added to that first sin.” The commensurableness of the grace of Christ with the sin of Adam, in respect of the number of persons gratified by the one, and damnified by the other, cannot ghtly be asserted in terms more significant. Nor do the words following import anything contrary hereunto, wherein the author addeth, “that the said grace of Christ bringeth all that are of Christ into a full or plenary justification.” For by a full or plenary justification, it is evident that he means an actual justification, yea, (as he explains himself a little after,) that justification which shall be awarded unto the saints at the great day of the resurrection ; to the obtaining of which, it is acknowledged, that men must receive a new being from Christ by faith. In what sense Christ abolished the sin of Adam, together with that death which it brought into the world; and so in what sense he is said to have brought righteousness, justification, and salvation unto all men, remains to be unfolded in due place. Upon the 17th verse the aforesaid author yet more clearly attests the substance of our interpretation, where he gives an account how the grace of Christ may be said to be of larger extent than the sin of Adam, notwithstanding it be true that this grace took away nothing but what, in a sense, was the fruit and effect of sin. “If we consider,” saith he, “that every particular man by his transgressions increaseth the misery of mankind, and that whosoever sinneth, doth no less hurt his posterity than Adam did all men ; it is a plain case, that the grace of Christ hath removed more evils from men than the sins of Adam brought upon them. For though there be no sin committed in all the world which hath not its original from that first sin of Adam, yet all particular men who sin, as they sin voluntarily and freely, so do they make an addition of their own proper guilt and misery. *All which evils,*

since the alone *benefit of Christ hath taken away*, it must needs be that it hath taken away the sins of many, and not of one only. Manifest, therefore, is it, that more evils have been removed by Christ, than were brought in by Adam.” And yet more plainly and expressly to the point in hand (if more may be) upon, verse 18, the sense whereof he gives thus: “As by the fall of one, sin prevailed over all, so as to make all liable unto condemnation: so likewise the righteousness of one so far took place on the behalf of all men, that all men may obtain the justification of life thereby.” By this time I suppose Bucer hath said enough, both to assert the interpretation of the Scripture in hand, that hath been given, as also the universality of redemption by Christ.

The said Scripture calls for the sense and exposition asserted, with such a loud and distinct voice, that Gualter also (another divine of the same rank and quality with the former) could not but hearken to it. “As by the offence of one,” saith he, completing the apostle’s sentence, and rendering his sense therein, “condemnation was propagated unto all men ; so also, by the righteousness of one, justification of life was propagated, or imparted, unto *all men*” Again thus, “As by the offence of one Adam, the judgment or guilt came upon all men to condemnation ; so also by the righteousness of one Jesus Christ, the gift or benefit of God, abounded unto *all men* to justification of life.”

Any man that shall read with a single eye what Calvin himself hath written upon the said contexture of Scriptures, cannot judge him an adversary to the premised exposition. “Paul,” saith he, upon verse 15, “simply teacheth that the amplitude,” or compass, “of the grace purchased by Christ, is greater than of the condemnation contracted by the first man.” Not long after, “The sum of all comes to this, that Christ overcomes Adam: the righteousness of Christ vanquisheth Adam’s sin: Adam’s malediction,” or curse, “is overwhelmed with Christ’s grace: the death which proceeded from Adam is swallowed up by that life which comes from Christ.” Doubtless if the curse brought upon men by Adam prevails and remains still untaken off upon far the greatest part of men, it is not overwhelmed with the grace of Christ: nor is the death which proceeded from him swallowed up by the life of Christ, if still it reigns and magnifies itself over and against far greater numbers of men than the life itself of Christ preserves or delivers from it. Upon verse 18, he presenteth his thoughts in these words, “He,” Paul, “makes grace

*common unto all men*, because it is exposed unto,” or laid within the reach of, “all men: not because it is in the reality, of it extended unto all men,” i. e. not because it is accepted or received by all men, as the words following plainly show: “For,” saith he, “though *Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world*; and through the goodness or bounty of God be offered unto all men, yet all men do not take, or lay bold on him.” So that if Calvin would but quit himself like a man, and stand his own ground, he would remonstrate as stoutly as Corvine, or Arminius himself.

## CHAPTER 7.

**The third sort, or consort of Scriptures, mentioned Chap. 5, as clearly asserting the Doctrine hitherto maintained, argued, and managed to the same point.**

WE shall not need, I conceive, to insist upon a particular examination of these Scriptures, one by one, (the method observed by us in handling the two former parts,) because they are more apparently uniform and consenting in their respective importances than they. In which respect, a clear and thorough discussion of any one of them, or a diligent poising of the common tendency and import of them all, will be sufficient to evince their respective compliances with the cause in hand. The prospect of these texts is this. “And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” John 6:37; “He that believeth in me, shall never thirst,” ver. 35; “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,” Mark 16:16; “That *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish,” &c. John 3:16; “That through his name, *whosoever* believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins,” Acts 10:43; “Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all*, and *upon all* who believe; for *all* have sinned,” &c. Rom. 3:22, 23; to omit very many others of like tenor and import.

In all these Scriptures, with their fellows, evident it is that salvation is held forth and promised by God unto all, without exception, that shall believe; yea, that it is offered and promised unto all men, upon the condition of believing, whether they believe or no. So that, upon such declarations of the gracious and good pleasure of God towards the universality of men as these, the ministers of the gospel, or any other men, may with truth, and ought of duty upon occasion, say to every particular soul of man under heaven, “If thou believest thou shalt be” saved,” even as Paul saith that he preached Christ, “admonishing *every man*, and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that he might present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus,” Colos. 1:28. Yea, this apostle, speaking of God himself, saith, that “he admonisheth all men every where to repent,” Acts 17:30. Now if the gospel, or God in the gospel, offereth salvation unto all men, without exception, and insureth it accordingly upon their believing, certainly he hath it to bestow upon them, in case they do

believe: otherwise he should offer or promise that unto them which he hath not for them, nor is able to confer upon them, though they should believe. If he hath salvation, for them, or to bestow upon them upon their believing, he must have it in Christ: because he hath no other treasury or storehouse of salvation, but only Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. Acts 4:12. If God hath salvation in Christ for all men, Christ must needs have bought and purchased it for them, with his blood, inasmuch as there is no salvation, no not in Christ himself, without or otherwise than by remission of sins ; nor any remission of sins in or by him, without shedding of blood. Therefore all those Scriptures, wherein God promiseth and ascertaineth salvation am to all men, without exception, upon their believing, are pregnant with this truth, that Christ laid down his life for the salvation of all and every man.

If it be here replied and said, But though God in the gospel offers salvation unto all men, and promiseth salvation unto all men upon condition of their believing respectively, yet knowing certainly beforehand that none will believe, but only such and such by name, as viz. those for whom there is salvation purchased by Christ, he may upon a sufficient ground, and with security enough, promise salvation unto all men, upon condition they will believe, answer,

Though God, by means of the certainty of such his knowledge, may, without danger of failing in point of promise-keeping, or of being taken at his word to his dishonour, promise salvation unto all men, without exception, upon the terms specified, though it should be supposed that Christ hath not purchased salvation for all men; yet upon such a supposition as this, he cannot, either with honour or otherwise, or with truth, make any such offer or promise. Not with honour; because for a man, that is generally and certainly known to be worth but only one thousand pounds in estate, to offer or promise an hundred thousand pounds to any man that shall be willing to serve him, or to do such or such a courtesy for him, though he knew certainly that no man would accept his offer in either of these kinds, yet would such an offer or promise be matter of disparagement to him in the sight of wise and understanding men, yea, render him little other than ridiculous. In like manner, it being supposed by our antagonists in the cause now under plea, that God hath declared it unto all the world in his gospel, that Christ hath died but for a few men, in comparison, and, consequently, that

himself hath salvation only for a few, in case he should promise salvation unto all men without exception, upon what account, service, or condition soever, must needs turn to dishonour in the highest unto him, and represent him unto his creature extremely unlike to himself. Suppose the devil had certainly known, as very possibly he might, that the Lord Christ would not have fallen down and worshipped him, upon any terms or conditions whatsoever, would this have excused him from vanity, in promising him all the kingdoms of the world upon such a condition, when, as all the world knew, that not one of these kingdoms were at his disposal.

Again, 2. Neither can God, nor any minister of the gospel, say with truth to every particular man, if thou believest thou shalt be saved, unless it be supposed that there is salvation purchased or in being for them all. Because the truth of such an assertion cannot be salved by this, that all men or every particular man will not believe. The truth of a connex, or hypothetical proposition, of which kind this is, If thou Peter, or thou John believest, thou shalt be saved, doth not depend upon any thing that is contingent, no, nor yet upon any thing that is extra-essential to the terms of the proposition itself, (such as is, as well the non-believing as the believing of particular men,) but upon the essential and necessary connexion between the two parts of the proposition, the antecedent and consequent. If this connexion be contingent, loose, or false, the proposition itself is false, though in every other respect it should be accommodated to the best. As, for example, in this proposition, If Isaac were Abraham's son, then was he truly godly; both the parts considered apart, are true ; for true it is, 1. That Isaac was Abraham's son: and 2. That he was truly godly; yet the proposition is absolutely false; because there is no necessary or essential connexion between being Abraham's son and true godliness: therefore the one cannot be truly inferred or concluded from the other. In like manner, when I shall say thus unto a man, If thou believest thou shalt be saved, it is neither his non-believing, nor the certainty of my knowledge that he will not believe, that either maketh or evinceth such a proposition to be true: because neither of these relates to the connexion of the parts thereof, nor contains the least reason or ground why the latter should follow upon the former. The man's not believing is no reason at all why, upon his believing, he should certainly be saved: no more is my knowledge, how certain soever it be, that he will

not believe. But to verify such a proposition or saying, there must be a certain and indissolvable connexion between such a man's salvation and believing, in case he should believe. Such a connexion as this there cannot be, unless there were salvation for him, which he might have and enjoy in case he should believe. Now certain it is, that if Christ died not for him, there is no more salvation for him, in case he should believe, than there would be in case he should not believe: there being no salvation for any man, upon any terms or condition whatsoever, unless Christ hath purchased it for him by his death. Nor doth Christ's purchasing salvation for any man, depend upon such a man's believing; no more doth his non-purchasing salvation for him upon his not believing. So that, unless it be supposed that Christ hath purchased salvation for a man, whilst he remains yet an unbeliever, and though he should always remain an unbeliever, it cannot be supposed that he purchased salvation for him, though he should believe: and, consequently, there can be no truth in thin proposition or assertion, spoken to a man who should not believe, If thou believest thou shalt be saved; it being certain, upon the aforesaid supposition of Christ's non-dying for him, that he should not, could not he saved, no not though he should believe.

If it be replied, Yea, but the truth of this saying to any man whatsoever, "If thou believest thou shalt be saved," is sufficiently salved upon this account, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, though not intentionally, so that in case any man whatsoever shall or should believe, there is salvation ready for him in Christ.

I answer, that the vanity, or mere nullity rather in respect of the coincidence of the members of this distinction, wherein Christ is affirmed to have died sufficiently for all men, but denied to have died intentionally for all men, hath been demonstratively and at large evinced formerly. I here only add, that if there be salvation ready in Christ for all and every man in case they should believe, then must this salvation be found in him, either naturally and in respect of his mere person, or by way of purchase and procurement, *i. e.* by means of his death. No man, I presume, will affirm the former, as, *viz.* that there is salvation in Christ for any man, in respect of his mere nature or person; or howsoever, himself plainly denies it: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," John 12:24. If there be no salvation in him for



men but by purchase, and this with his blood, then hath he no more salvation in him than what he thus purchased; no man hath any thing more by purchase than what he hath bought or purchased. Therefore, if Christ hath salvation in him for all men without exception, he must have purchased or bought it for them with his blood. If so, he must either purchase more than he intended, or else intend to purchase salvation for all and every man. And what is this, without any parable, but to die intentionally for all men? Therefore the distinction of Christ dying sufficiently for all men, but not intentionally, is ridiculous, and unworthy from first to last of any intelligent or considering man.

Nor is that distinction, because it relates to the subject-matter of our present chapter, so emphatically insisted upon by Mr. Rutherford, of much better import. "That eternal life," saith he, "should be offered unto all and every individual man, upon condition of faith ; and that life should be offered unto all and every individual man, out of an intent on God's part to give life unto them in case they believe, are two sayings widely different."

For, doubtless, the latter hath every whit as much truth in it, yea, every whit as much clear and pregnant truth in it as the former, yea, hath in effect one and the same truth. For when God offers eternal life unto all and every individual man, upon condition of faith, is it not his intention that they should have eternal life upon their faith, or in case they should believe? If not, then in such an offer he should offer and promise that which he intends not to give or perform, no not according to the tenor of his promise. If it be said, in favour of the distinction, But though God intends to give eternal life to all and every individual man, upon condition they believe, this being the express tenor of his offer or promise, yet it follows not that such an intention in him should be is reason or ground of tendering such an offer or promise unto them? Unto this I answer, That if this were the intent of the author, I mean to difference the latter proposition from the former in point of error or falsehood, upon this account, because the latter supposeth such an intention, as that mentioned, in God, to be the adequate reason or motive why he tenders such an offer or promise unto them, I should not much gainsay, because, I suppose, that God hath indeed other reasons, and these of greater weight, why he makes a tender of salvation unto all men upon condition of faith, than his intention of giving salvation unto them

in case they shall believe. Yea, I do not conceive that either God or men do any thing which they intend, simply out of their intentions thereof, or because they intend it, but out of a desire to effect, or to procure the effecting of it, or because they desire it.

But that the author's meaning in impleading the said latter proposition of error was far differing from this, appears sufficiently by the account which himself gives hereof in the sequel of his discourse. From this account it clearly appears, that in framing the said latter proposition, he useth those words, “ ex Dei intentione, for “ cum Dei intentione,” and placeth the error of the proposition in this, viz. that it supposeth an intention to be in God of giving life unto all men upon their faith, when he makes the offer mentioned unto them. To prove this to be an error, he argues to this effect, from John 17:2, for his other arguments are plainly GREEK; “God the Father gave power unto the Son to give eternal life to those *only* who were given unto him by the Father. But reprobates,” saith he, “ are not given unto the Son by the Father therefore the Father gave no power unto the Son to give eternal life unto reprobates; and consequently the Son can, either according to his own, or to his Father's intention, offer remission of sins or eternal life unto reprobates.” To this I answer, That the whole proceed of the argument ariseth from a mistaken ground, or a plain misunderstanding of the Scripture upon which it is built. For by a “ power given unto the Son to give eternal life,” &c. is not meant a power of dying for men, one or other, but a power off an actual and real investing men with eternal life, or a power to confer eternal life actually upon, men, as appears from the former clause of the verse: “ As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life,” &c. From whence it is evident, that the power here spoken of as given unto the Son to give eternal life, &c., is a consequent branch or effect of that power or sovereignty which the Father hath given him over all mankind, as, viz. to dispose of them, especially in respect of their eternal estates and conditions, according to such rules of righteousness and equity as the Father, with the Son, have judged meet and accordingly agreed upon, for the regulating of such high and important dispensations. Now, a power of conferring eternal life upon men, may very well be conceived to be a branch or part of that sovereignty or larger power, which the Father hath given unto the Son over all flesh. But an injunction or command, or a free leave or liberty, notion it how you please, given

unto Him to die for a few men, cannot reasonably be looked upon as any part or branch, especially as any such considerable or high-importing branch as this here expressed must needs be conceived to be, of that most transcendent and majestic power. Or,

2. By eternal life may very well be meant, not eternal life properly and formally so called, as, viz. the blessedness and glory of the world to come, but such a discovery or manifestation of God and His counsels, which is an effectual means to bring men in time to the possession and enjoyment of this life. It is a frequent dialect of Scripture to call the means and cause, yea, and sometimes an opportunity only, which are proper and effectual for the compassing, effecting, or obtaining a thing, by the name of the thing itself, which is to be, or may be, procured or effected by them. Thus Numb. 22:7, the wages or rewards by which the elders of Moab sent from Balak the king, to Balaam the wizard, expected to procure divinations, or some imprecatory and devilish practices against the people of God from him, are termed divinations. "And the elders of Moab," saith the text, "and the elders of Midian went, and divinations in their hand," &c. Thus, good tidings is put for the reward which good tidings usually procure unto them who bring them, 2 Sam. 4:10. In this phrase of speech, the Scriptures, or the saving knowledge of God therein revealed, are, according to the general sense of our best interpreters, termed salvation, John 4:22. So again, Heb. 2:2. Thus wisdom is called a man's life, "Keep her, for she is thy life," Prov. 4:13, because she is the means of life, *i. e.* of peace and well-being unto men. In this sense also, to forbear further instances which are in great numbers at hand, the gospel, and sometimes the preaching or ministry of it, is frequently termed the kingdom of heaven. According to this manner of speaking, so familiar in the Scriptures, by eternal life, which the Son had power given him over all flesh, that he might give to as many as the Father had given him, may well be meant the words of eternal life, as Peter calls them, John 6:68; or that manifestation of the name of God, as himself speaketh soon after, John 17:6, by which they might be effectually brought to the fruition and enjoyment of eternal life. And that this indeed is the very meaning of our Saviour, is abundantly evident by the sequel of the context all along, for several verses together. For having said that the Father had given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as he had given him, verse 2, he immediately declares, verse 3, what he means by

eternal life, “And this is life eternal, that they know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.” This notion he still carrieth on, saying, verse 6, “I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” &c. So again, directly still to the same point, verse 8, “For I have given them the words which thou gavest me,” &c.; yet again, upon the same account, verse 14, “I have given them thy word,” &c. That which, verse 2, he had called eternal life, here he calls his Father’s word, as before, the declaration or manifestation of his name, as we heard.

From the carriage of the context, that further is abundantly evident, that by those words, verse 2, “As many as thou hast given him,” are not meant the elect, or the entire number of the elect, or of those for whom Christ died, (in Mr. Rutherford’s sense,) but precisely and particularly his apostles, of whom alone he speaks, and for whom alone, and apart from the rest of the elect, he prayeth all along the chapter, until verse 20, when he enlargeth his prayer thus, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word.” From this passage, it is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that from the beginning of the chapter until now, he had managed his prayer and heavenly conference with the Father, with particular reference to his apostles, and had not mentioned any thing about the residue of the elect. That he speaks of the apostles only, verse 2, under those words, “As many as thou hast given me,” is most apparent from verse 6, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they *have kept* thy word.” First. Christ had not yet manifested his Father’s name to all the elect, no, not to all the elect at this time in being in the world. Second. Neither could he say to his Father concerning all the elect, that they had kept his word, many of them having not as yet received it. Again, to pass by several things by the way making out the same truth, verse 12, thus, “Whilst I was with them in the world,” (meaning those of whom he had spoken from the beginning of the chapter,) “I kept them in thy name,” *i.e.* I preserved them from the exorbitances of the world by the knowledge of thy name, which still I have been communicating unto them; “Those that thou gavest me I have kept; and none of them is lost but the son of perdition,” &c. Evident it is, that this son of perdition was one of that number of men which the Father had given him out of the world, and which he had kept entirely without the

miscarriage of any one, this son of perdition only excepted. I presume, that neither Mr. Rutherford, nor any of his judgment, will say that this “son of perdition” was one of the number of the elect; but certain it is, that he was one of that number of men which the Father had given unto Christ out of the world. The words are too express to bear a denial of this, “Those that thou gavest me I have kept; and none *of them* is lost but the son of perdition,” &c. Therefore, by as many as the Father had given unto him, with an intent that he should give eternal life unto them, verse 2, are meant the apostles, and these only. These may be said to have been given unto Christ by the Father, not because they were the Father’s by election from eternity, for doubtless the son of perdition, as hath, been said, was none of His in such a relation, nor simply because they were by any peremptory designation appointed and set out by him from amongst other men, to make apostles for his Son, as if Christ had been necessitated to take these, and had no liberty or right of power to have taken any others into that relation; for how could then Christ say unto them that he had chosen them, viz. to the office and dignity of apostles, John 6:70; 13:18; 25:16—19, but because God the Father by a work appropriable unto him, of which I conceive we shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter, had qualified, fitted and prepared them for Christ’s hand and nurture, and so to make apostles of in time; in respect of which work of God the Father, in and upon them, Christ, out of that wisdom wherein he excelled, and that knowledge which he had of the several frames and tempers of the hearts of men, made a prudent and deliberate choice of them from amongst other men for that service. “Thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me.” They are said to have been the Father’s, *i. e.* as it were, the Father’s disciples, or persons “taught by the Father,” John 6:45, and so, after a sort, appropriable unto the Father, (as those that believe and are taught of Christ are said to be Christ’s, or to belong to Christ,) before they became Christ’s apostles, or were chosen by him upon this account; and are said to have been given unto him out of the world by the Father, because they were peculiarly qualified, and, as it were, characterized and marked out by the Father as fit matter to be formed into apostles by his Son. The word “give” is frequently found in such a signification as this in the Scriptures, and to import the preparing, furnishing, or fitting, whether of things or persons, for such and such ends and purposes, in reference to the

accommodations of men. In this sense Christ is said to have "given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry," &c.; *i. e.* to have every ways prepared, qualified, endowed, fitted, furnished persons for all these offices and services in his church, for the benefit of the saints, &c. Thus Acts 13:20, "he gave them judges," &c.; *i. e.* he qualified and furnished men amongst them, from time to time, with public spirits and with gifts fit for government, &c. So Neh. 9:27, "Thou *gavest* them Saviours;" *i. e.* thou furnishedst men with hearts, and courage, and wisdom, &c., to save them. See Eph. 1:22, "He *gave* him to be head over all things to his church *i. e.* he furnished him with sovereignty of power, wisdom, majesty, and with all manner of endowments otherwise requisite for such a head. Thus Psal. 44:11, "Thou hast *given* us like sheep for meat," &c.; *i. e.* by withdrawing thy presence, help, and protection from us, thou hast prepared and fitted us to become a prey and spoil to our enemies. In this sense also God saith to Jeremy, that he had *given* him (for so it is in the original) "a prophet unto the nations *i. e.* that he had furnished him, and meant to furnish him yet further, with prophetic gifts and endowments for the benefit of nations, if they would hearken to him, Jer. 1:5. So Psal. 21:6, "Thou hast given him to be blessings," (so it is in the original, and is your marginal translation;) *i. e.* thou hast so furnished, qualified, and disposed of him, (meaning Christ,) that whosoever will apply themselves unto him, may be made happy and blessed by him. See Ezek. 3:8, 9; Isa. 43:16, in the original, with others like. Our Saviour himself useth the word in the sense now instanced from the Scriptures, when he expresseth himself thus: "All that the Father giveth me, shall," or rather, will "come unto me," &c., John 6:37; of which place more in due time.

Nor ought it to seem any hard, uncouth, or unpleasant expression unto us, wherein that which is prepared or any ways made fit for us, and withal so disposed of or set in our way that we may readily and lawfully serve ourselves with it, is said to be *given* unto us by him or them who thus prepare and dispose of it. He that shall prepare wholesome and savoury meat, such as a man loveth, and shall set it before him, and give him free leave to take it or eat of it, may in sufficient propriety of speech be said to *give* this meat unto him, yea, whether he takes or eats of it upon such terms or no. So God the Father, having wrought and fitted the men whom

Christ chose for apostles, to serve and honour him in this capacity, and withal disposed of them in their times, residences, and conditions in the world, so that Christ might both readily and lawfully call them to his service, he may very well in these respects be said to have given them unto him.

Thus, by a diligent and narrow inquiry into Mr. Rutherford's Scripture, it evidently appears that there is *nec vola nec vestigium*, not the least mutter or peep, of any such notion, in it as he imagineth, viz. that if Christ should offer eternal life unto any more than only unto the elect, (so called by him,) he must needs do it besides his own and his Father's intention. Here is not the least word, syllable, letter, apex or GREEK concerning either the Father's or the Son's intentions about the offer of salvation unto men.

By the brief discussions of this chapter, it fully appears that all those texts of Scripture which offer either forgiveness of sins or salvation unto all men without exception, and which promise either or both these unto all men upon, or upon condition of, their believing, which are very frequently numerous, do with the clearest light and evidence of truth hold forth the universality of redemption by Christ: from whence it follows, in regular and due process of reason and discourse, that all they "make God a liar" in such Scriptures, who restrain the salvation or redemption purchased by Christ to any lesser number of men than all.

## CHAPTER 8.

**Wherein the Scriptures of the fourth and last association (propounded Chap, 5.,) as pregnant also with that great truth hitherto maintained, are impartially weighed and considered.**

WE shall, God assisting, examine every of these Scriptures particularly, and so shall have occasion to exhibit the purport and tenor of them respectively as they shall be produced to act their several parts in order; in which respect we shall not here transcribe them, especially considering the reader may with a very little pains see them in their muster, Chap. 5.; but shall only point at their several dwellings or situations in the Book of God, which are these: Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Pet. 2:1; 2 Pet. 2:20; Heb. 10:29; Matt, 18:32, 33, &c. We make these Scriptures of one and the same combination, and associate them by themselves because their import is in effect one and the same, they all supposing that Christ hath died for those who may perish notwithstanding, yea, for those who will perish; and, certainly, if he died for those who, notwithstanding his dying for them, may perish, yea, and for those who will actually perish, as well as for those who shall be saved, he died for all men without exception. For as for that opinion of the Valentine Council, in France, mentioned by Estius, and adopted by him, as it seems, for his own, which supposeth some reprobates, as he calleth them, to have been redeemed by Christ, but not all,—this opinion, I say, is not like, as far as I conceive, to make many proselytes, nor to attract the judgments of considering men: for if the dying of Christ for men be to be esteemed matter of love to them, as without all controversy and question it ought, what reason can there be imagined why he should die for apostate reprobates, (who yet are that kind of reprobate for which only Christ died, according to that opinion), rather than for those who, though living and dying in unbelief, yet never contracted the guilt of so desperate and provoking a sin ? But this by the way.

The tenor of the Scripture first in view, amongst those lately appearing, is this: “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died,” Rom. 14:15.

1. That the destruction here spoken of, whereunto the strong Christian is



so earnestly admonished and dehorted by the apostle from exposing the weak, is not any temporal destruction, but that which is of body and soul for ever, is more clear than to require proof. It is not easily imaginable how or that a strong Christian, or any other man, by eating meat sacrificed unto idols, should expose a weak Christian unto the danger of any other destruction, but of that only which is decreed by God against those who shall depart from the faith, or finally apostatise from the profession of Christ. Besides, it is every man's notion, that this is that destruction, that first-born of things formidable and dreadful unto the precious souls of men, with which this great apostle had so much to do, and from which the great prize that he runs for with all his might in all his epistles, was to deliver them.

2. Whereas he chargeth men not to destroy those "for whom Christ died," though he doth not indeed suppose that all those shall be actually destroyed or perish, whom another may be said to destroy, *i. e.*, to do things tending to their destruction, which is the sense of the word in this place; yet this he clearly supposeth, that such men "for whom Christ died" are obnoxious to destruction, may be destroyed, and perish everlastingly. Otherwise we shall quench the spirit of his zealous tenderness over the precious souls of weak Christians, expressed in this serious item or charge unto others, not to destroy them; yea, and make him speak very weakly, and, indeed, ridiculously. To admonish men in a serious and solemn manner, to take heed of destroying those who are out of all possibility of being destroyed, especially this being known to the men that are thus admonished, is as if a man should seriously and affectionately entreat an archer with his bow and arrows about him, to take heed of shooting too high for fear of hurting the sun, and causing him to fall down out of the firmament of heaven.

If it be said; Yea, but though it be supposed, that the persons admonished in this case do know in the general that they, for whom Christ died, are not under a possibility of perishing, yet they may be ignorant in particular, whether those men whose destruction they are like to procure or promote by the abuse of their Christian liberty, be of the number of those men for whom Christ died or no; and consequently the apostle may upon a good account admonish them to take heed of destroying such.

I answer, it can at no hand be supposed that the persons here

admonished should be ignorant, whether the men about whose destruction they are so deeply cautioned by the apostle, be of the number of those “for whom Christ died,” because the apostle himself so plainly and positively asserteth it: “For whom,” saith he, “Christ died.” Besides, the main strength and stress of the argument or motive by which he enforceth the dehortation standeth in this, that those persons, whosoever they be, whose salvation they shall endanger by eating things sacrificed to idols, are of those for whom Christ died. Now, to press an exhortation or dehortation upon the consciences of men by such a motive, wherein these men shall be supposed ignorant whether there be any truth or no, is to fight with a wooden sword; especially when it shall be yet further supposed, that such men are under an absolute incapacity of ever knowing whether there be any truth or no in this motive, which must needs be the case here, if we shall suppose there be any number of men for whom Christ died not. For, impossible it is, and so generally confessed to be, for one man certainly to know the truth of grace or faith in another; and much more to know the certainty of his perseverance unto the end; and consequently, according to the principles of anti-universalism, for any man to know whether Christ died for any man in particular and by name but himself.

Therefore most certain it is, that there is a possibility for those to perish and be destroyed for whom Christ died, or notwithstanding Christ’s dying for them. And if so, then Christ’s dying for men doth not suppose a necessity of their salvation; and if so, then Christ died as well for those who, may not be saved, and shall not be saved, as for those who may, and shall; and consequently, for all men: for they who may, and shall be saved, and they who may not, neither shall be saved, together comprehend all men whatsoever.

The exposition of the Scripture in hand, as importing the death of Christ for those who yet may be destroyed and perish, is so pregnant with evidence and truth, that it hath subdued the judgments of all expositors I meet with unto it. “And Christ verily,” saith Chrysostom upon the place, “refused not, neither to be made a servant, nor to die for him; and wilt not thou so much as neglect thy belly to save him? For although Christ was not like to (win, or) gain all men, yet did he die for all men, so fulfilling that which appertained to him,” (in order to the procuring of their salvation.) Our late protestant expositors follow in the same path. “

Another consideration,” saith Calvin, “ wherein the offence of the brethren renders the use of things, in themselves good, vicious (or faulty) is, that in wounding a weak conscience, the price of the blood of Christ is dissipated (or dissolved); for even the most contemptible brother, or member of a Christian society, is redeemed by the blood of Christ; therefore a (very) unworthy thing it is, that he should be destroyed for the satisfaction of any man’s belly.” I trust that from henceforth, no man that shall read these passages from his pen will say hut that Calvin clearly held a possibility of the destruction of such men for whom Christ died, and consequently, that Christ died for more than shall be saved: and if so, for all, as we formerly argued.

“He,” saith Peter Martyr, meaning Christ, “hath *redeemed* him ; wilt thou *destroy* him, (speaking of the apostle’s weak brother.) He hath shed his life, soul, and blood for thy brother; canst not thou for his sake abstain from a poor piece of meat?” Therefore the clear sense of this orthodox man is, that the redeemed of Christ may perish and be destroyed.

“If the salvation of our brethren,” saith M. Bucer on the place, “be to be procured by us by the laying down of our lives, and nothing be to be respected in comparison thereof; how impious and accursed a thing is it, that any man should destroy a brother for meat.” He had said immediately before: “If we follow Christ, he for the rescuing, or saving, our brethren, suffered death; therefore we also ought to lay down our lives for the salvation of the brethren, and to abhor the destroying of a brother more than death.” Therefore he also plainly supposeth, that even such a brother may be destroyed, and that for meat, for whom Christ died.

Musculus speaks by the same spirit with the former. “To this grieving of the brethren, the apostle aptly subjoins the destruction of those who are offended at the unadvised liberty of those that are strong. For the mind being thus grieved, as being weak, easily falls to this point, viz., to begin by little and little, being shaken through a sinister suspicion, to fall away from Christianity, and *from true faith*” In which words, the author clearly avoucheth the opinion of those, not only who hold that those may be destroyed for whom Christ died, but theirs also, whose judgment stands for a possibility of falling away., and that to destruction, from true faith. But as to the former point, he speaks more significantly, a little after the former words. “It is all one, as if the apostle should say, Christ

would have him saved, and sought it by his death; but thou dost not only despise thy brother, but opposest Christ also, and makest void,” or of none effect, “through thy rashness, and that for the sake of meat, that *death* of his, which he underwent *for his sake*, and by which thou thyself also art saved.

Nor doth B. Aretius break rank, but marcheth in close order with his fellows. “The apostle’s argument,” saith he, “is from the effects: thou destroyest him with the use of things indifferent, whom Christ redeemed by his death. What madness is that?” And soon after, “Meat haply preserves thy life: but Christ died for him whom thou slayest, not by dying, but by living: what cruelty is this?”

Let R. Gualter bring up the rear, for saying, “The apostle in this teacheth that Christ himself is sinned against, yea, and that the merit of his death is overthrown when we destroy him whom he, by his death and blood, hath vindicated,” or restored “unto life.”

Here are many witnesses, though many more might readily be summoned in with the same evidence, and those of the first-born qualification for authority and credit in such cases, (I mean men orthodox and sound in the judgment of those, who assume the same honour unto themselves, and who are the high opposers of the doctrine under protection in the present discourse,) speaking the same things plainly, expressly, and without parable, with the assertors of this doctrine. Neither, indeed, could they, or any other man, having such Scriptures before them as that last insisted upon, with the former, to order their judgments and thoughts, conceive, or speak otherwise, with any tolerable ingenuity, or without some such winking with the eyes which is unworthy men pretending friendship to the truth. But let us hear what the Spirit of God saith further in the point.

The next Scripture lately directed unto was 1 Cor. 8:11:

“And through thy knowledge,” or through thy meat, as Chrysostom reads the place, “shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.” Some copies read the words with an interrogation, and thus, either our English translators or printers, or both, deliver them unto us; others assertively. This difference in the pointing makes none in the matter or substance of the doctrine contained in the words. Only the interrogative is more piercing and provoking to the consideration of the truth imported. The tenor of the place is the same, in effect, with that last opened; and clearly

supposeth, upon the account given in the traverse of that Scripture, that such a person may miscarry in the great business of salvation, notwithstanding Christ's laying down his life for him. The reader is desired to revise our debate upon the former place for his satisfaction herein; unless, haply, the consent of the best interpreters in that behalf will balance that accommodation.

"Thy Lord and Master," saith Chrysostom on the place, "refused not to die for him: but thou makest no reckoning of him, no not so much as to abstain from a polluted table for his sake; but sufferest him to *perish after salvation procured for him* upon such terms." And soon after, "So that here are four accusations," or matters of charge, "and these exceeding high; 1. That he is a brother. 2. That he is weak. 3. That he is one *whom Christ so highly prized as even to die for him*. 4. That after all this *he perisheth* for meat."

The expressness of the words overruled even Calvin's pen also to an assertion of the same truth. "He is indeed weak whom thou despisest, but yet a brother: for God hath adopted him. Therefore, cruel art thou who hast no care of thy brother. But that which follows is yet more pressing; viz., that even those that are rude or weak, are redeemed by the blood of Christ. For there is nothing of greater unworthiness than that Christ should not scruple to die, that the weak might not perish; and we in the meantime lightly esteem the salvation of those who have been redeemed at so great a price. A memorable saying, whereby we axe taught how highly we ought to value the salvation of our brethren; and of these, not only, as considered in the lump, or in the general, but of every one of them in particular, inasmuch as *Christ's blood was shed for every one of them*." Nor can it reasonably be pretended that by the brethren, for "every of which," he saith, "the blood of Christ was shed," he means only the elect. For evident it is, that he speaks of the generality of professors who were joined in external communion with the churches of Christ, many of whom he could not but know, were not elect, at least in the sense of such pretenders.

Aretius worketh the place thus: "Here is another fruit" (or effect) "of that licentious liberty, greater than the former. For the former only was, that by means of such an example men were strengthened in an evil error; but here he showeth, that he that is weak is even destroyed." And presently after: "In conclusion, this practice mightily differs from the example of

Christ, for he died for the weak sinner,” &c. So that this expositor also clearly supposeth, that men may destroy him for whom Christ died.

Nor doth learned Musculus vary an hair's-breadth from the import of these things, upon the place demanding thus: “How, I pray, can he be excused, who for meat's sake destroyeth him whom Christ redeemed with his blood ?” And not long after: “What greater sin can be committed against Christ, than to slay (or destroy) “him for whom he himself died ?”

I finish this account with Mr. I. Diodati's gloss upon the words. “Perish,” *i. e.* saith he, “shall be in danger of wounding his conscience mortally; and whereas before, through tenderness of conscience, he abhorred any thing that drew near to idolatry, he may peradventure use himself to it to the shipwreck of salvation.”

These expositors do not mince the words, as Piscator and some few others do, who destroying hereby the best of the nourishment in them gloss them thus: “Thy weak brother shall perish,” viz. “as to thee, or as much as lieth in thee.” I confess such a bridle as this doth well in the lips of some other Scripture expressions, which will not be ruled by the truth without it, hut it encumbers the Scripture in hand, and abridgeth the serviceableness of it. For if it shall be supposed, that that kind of offender against the weak Christian, of whom the apostle here speaketh, knoweth certainly beforehand that his act in eating meat sacrificed unto idols can have no such sad effect or sequel upon it, as the destruction of a weak brother, must he not needs be tempted hereby to despise the apostle's charge on that behalf, being grounded mainly upon such an assertion or supposal? and so be comforted or encouraged in his sinful practice? To put restrictions upon Scripture phrases or assertions, without necessity, and this demonstrable, either from other Scriptures, or unquestionable grounds of reason, is not to interpret the Scriptures now in being, but upon the matter to make new.

If it be replied in favour of the said limitation or explication of Piscator, That there will be great weight and force enough to command the consciences of men in the apostle's argument, and to take them off from abuse of their liberty, though it should be supposed that there is only a tendency in such a practice towards the destruction of weak believers, whether it be supposed that such persons may actually perish and be destroyed or not.

I answer, There can be no tendency supposed, in any action or means

towards an impossibility. For that which is simply impossible, or which is the same in effect, impossible upon a condition that is immutable and cannot fail, is never the more possible, nor any whit nearer unto being upon any other account, or for any thing whatsoever that can be done. Therefore there is nothing can be done with any tendency towards the effecting of such a thing. Besides, were it granted, that there is a tendency in such a practice, the forbearance whereof the apostle urgeth towards the destruction of a weak brother, yea, and further, that this practice in respect of such a tendency in it were sinful, yet would there be very little in either, or both of these, to deter men from such a practice unless it be withal supposed that that sad effect, whereunto the said tendency is acknowledged to relate, may possibly be effected or produced by it. For the more secure a sinner may be that his sinful practice will not be so sadly consequenced, as the nature and property of it only considered, it might very possibly be, the greater temptation lieth upon him to adventure upon it. The confidence which Judas had, that his act in betraying his Master would not have been accompanied with his death, but that he would now, as several times before he had done, find some way or other to make an escape from those into whose hands he was betrayed, was one main thing which betrayed him into the deadly snare of that most abominable fact. For it is said, that “When Judas saw that he was condemned” (which implies, that this was more than he feared or expected, notwithstanding his act in betraying him) “he repented himself . . . . and cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself,” Matt. 27:3—5.

Thirdly, and lastly, the mention and tender of an impossible effect by way of motive, to overrule the consciences of men against a practice in one kind or other whereunto they are inclined, is little less than ridiculous, especially when the said impossibility is presumed to be known beforehand to him, the overruling of whose conscience is attempted thereby. Suppose I be full of this persuasion, 1. That I am a true believer. 2. That being such, I am under an impossibility ever to fall away so as to perish, and under this double persuasion were very much addicted to such or such a sinful course; the consideration of my falling away and perishing were the most improper and impertinent argument that lightly could be pressed upon me, to persuade me out of the way and practice of my sin.

But some as willing to break loose from the Scripture in hand as the former, yet being not satisfied with their projection for an escape, try the same conclusion another way, and by another device. The apostle, say they, calls a weak professor of the gospel by the name of a brother, not as if it could be demonstratively known that he is a brother indeed, but because others stand bound by the law of charity to judge him such: after the same manner he saith that Christ died for him, not as if he would have men to believe this according to the judgment or with the certainty of faith, but only with the judgment of charity. Upon this supposal they draw up the apostle's argument for him, thus, "Thy brother shall perish, for whom," &c., *i. e.* by the abuse of thy knowledge, thou mayest be the destruction of him whom thou art bound in charity to look upon as thy brother in Christ, and one of those for whom Christ died. But,

1. Why stand we not bound to believe, only with the judgment of charity, and not with the certainty of faith, that Christ is the Son of God, or Saviour of the world, &c. as well as to believe only after this manner, that he may "perish, for whom Christ died?" this latter being as positively, as clearly, as roundly and fully asserted by the Holy Ghost, as either of the former? Or what is such a liberty of interpreting Scriptures, as this, being interpreted, but an effectual door opened for the reducing of all things whatsoever in matters of religion, yea, the truth and authority of the Scriptures themselves, to the judgment of charity, and consequently to the casting the judgment of faith out of doors ? But,

2. To enjoin me a belief, only according to the judgment of charity, where a belief, according to the judgment of faith, would, be ten times more beneficial and serviceable unto me for the preserving of me from sin, especially when the ground-work of Divine Revelation before me will better, and with less descant upon the words, admit the latter belief than the former, which is the case in the Scripture in hand, is very contrary to the rule of charity, which restraineth me from doing my neighbour any prejudice or harm, as well in his spiritual, as outward estate: yea, and much more in the former, than in the latter.

3. If I stand bound to believe with the judgment of faith, that it is impossible for any man to perish, for whom Christ died, what will such a consideration as this (whether believed according to the one judgment or the other) viz. that Christ died for such or such a man, advantage me by way of preserving me from such a practice, which is apt to destroy him?



For if it be a truth, that Christ did die for him, I need not, according to the supposition mentioned, be at all tender about doing any thing, or forbearing any thing, out of any apprehension of danger, lest by the one or the other I should occasion his destruction. If it be a truth, that Christ did not die for him, upon what account should the apostle suggest unto me that he did die for him, or that it may be that he did die for him, by way of argument, to deter me from doing that which may tend to his destruction? Suppose one part of the men in the world were impenetrable and invulnerable, the other part, as now they are, exposed unto the danger of death upon wounds received, were it a congruous motive or ground of persuasion, whereby to caution me from wounding or smiting such or such a man with a sword, dagger, or the like, to inform me that this man is or may be invulnerable? or that I ought to presume or judge this man to be invulnerable? Would not such an argument as this rather strengthen my hand to a smiting of him, than any ways occasion me to forbear? They clearly make the Holy Ghost himself to reason at no better rate of understanding than this, in the Scripture in hand, who make it only a matter of charity to believe that Christ died for a weak brother; and that in case he did die for him he is upon this account undestroyable.

4. And, lastly, most evident it is, that the scope of the apostle in that, 1 Cor. 8., and there is the same consideration of, Rom. 14., is to deter Christians from an unseasonable and undue use of their liberty and knowledge: and this by an argument or motive drawn, not so much from what is unseemly, uncomely, or dangerous, in respect of themselves, but from the consideration of what danger or damage may very possibly accrue thereby unto others. The whole tenor and carriage of both contexts proclaim this aloud: so that there needs no more proof of it than only the perusal of the chapters themselves. Now the danger or damage which a Christian, by such an abuse of his liberty, as is here expressed, may very possibly create or occasion to another, the apostle affirms to be the destroying of his brother, for whom Christ died, *i. e.* the depriving of him of that great salvation and blessedness, which Christ by his death purchased for him. Now if this strong Christian stands bound to believe, according to the judgment of charity, that this person is a true brother, and one for whom Christ died, he stands bound to believe, according to the same judgment at least, if not according to the judgment of faith itself, that he may perish through the abuse of his liberty. Otherwise the

apostle's argument for the dissuading of him from such an abuse, cannot be supposed to take any place in him, nor work at all upon him, in order to such an end. For no consideration or saying whatsoever, unless believed with one kind of faith or other, can have any influence or operation upon men, either to persuade them to or from any practice. If, then, the strong Christian stands bound to believe, be it only according to the judgment of charity, that the weak professor is a brother indeed, and one for whom Christ died, he stands bound, also, to believe, according to the one judgment or the other, that he may perish through his unchristian misdemeanor in the use of his liberty. If so, then he, and consequently every other Christian, stands bound in conscience to believe that such a man may perish, for whom he stands bound in conscience likewise to believe that Christ died. For a belief, according to the judgment of charity, where it is required, is matter of duty and of conscience, as well as a belief according to the judgment of faith, in cases appropriate hereunto.

Neither is it true, according to the principles of that opinion, which we now implead, that a Christian stands bound in conscience to believe, no not according to the judgment of charity, that all that profess the faith of Christ are true brethren, or persons for whom Christ died. For the patrons of this opinion generally hold, 1. That many who make such a profession, are hypocrites, and not true brethren. 2. That many of this number will perish at last in their hypocrisy and unbelief. And thus fax they hold nothing but truth. But, 3. and lastly, they hold yet further, which they should do better to let go, that Christ died for none of those professors, who perish in the end. These things they hold and believe, not with a belief according to the judgment of charity, but dogmatically, and according to the judgment or certainty of faith. Now certain it is, that no man stands bound in conscience to believe that according to the judgment of charity, which is contrary to what he believeth, or what he truly judgeth himself bound in conscience to believe according to the judgment of faith: because no law or rule of charity bindeth me to believe, with any kind of belief whatsoever that God is a liar or untrue in his word, which is the foundation and rule of what I stand bound to believe, according to the judgment of faith. Such men, therefore, who believe, according to the judgment of faith, that all professors of Christianity shall not at last be saved, cannot, with the safety of their own principles, say

they stand bound in conscience to believe, with the belief of charity, that Christ died for them all: because in their notion, and according to their grounds, these two propositions are inconsistent in truth, viz. that Christ should die for all, and yet some perish. But thus it still happeneth to those who are engaged in the defence of an error; I mean, to entangle themselves, and to nonsensify such passages of Scripture which manifestly oppose their error, by such evasions, such unnatural and forced interpretations, which for the keeping alive of such a tenet, which were better dead, they are necessitated unto.

Nor will it avail them here to reply that they do not judge themselves bound in conscience to believe in a way of charity that all and every professor of the Christian faith are true brethren, or persons for whom Christ died, but only that there is no particular or single person in this heap concerning whom they stand not bound by the law of charity thus to believe, at least until they have ministered grounds of suspicion that indeed they are hypocrites; for to this I answer,

1. In such an explication of themselves as this, they clearly grant that for a time, viz. until professors administer grounds of jealousy that their faith is not sound, they stand bound to conceive of them all, one or other, without exception, (I mean, according to the Judgment of charity,) that Christ died for them. But such a belief as this is contrary to what they believe dogmatically, as hath been said, and according to the judgment of faith; therefore they still interfere: for to believe that Christ died for every individual professor, and to believe that he died for all professors without exception, is hut one and the same belief, nor can any difference be shown between them.

2. Neither is a symptom of hypocrisy, seen or observed in a professor, any sufficient ground for the reversal of such a judgment of charity concerning him, according to which we judged him a person for whom Christ died; because, 1. There may be many symptoms or signs of hypocrisy which are not demonstrative or of any essential eviction: and, 2. If a man were an evicted hypocrite yet may he recover from under this condemnation: therefore hypocrisy, though certainly known by a man, is no sufficient or reasonable ground, no, not according to the grounds of the doctrine now oppugned, why I may not or ought not, in a way of charity, to judge that Christ died for him notwithstanding. Thus, then, we see at last that no colour, plea, or pretence, no turning, shifting, or

winding about this way or that will salve the impertinency, that I say not importune absurdity, of any interpretation whatsoever of the Scripture in hand, which doth not in a clear comportance with the words, and scope, and drift of the apostle therein, suppose a possibility of their perishing for whom Christ died, and that in order to their non-perishing, as we shall have occasion to show further before the end of this chapter, in asserting another passage of Scripture to the same point. The next in the order propounded is 2 Pet. 2:1: “But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” Here it is clearly supposed, and as good as in plain terms affirmed, that men bought by the Lord, viz. Christ, as all interpreters expound, may, yea, and that some will, “bring upon themselves destruction.” If so, then evident it is that the Lord Christ bought with the price of his blood as well those who perish, and are destroyed by their own wickedness, as those that are saved; and consequently all men without exception.

That which is excepted against this interpretation and inference from the place, is very faint and weak. If you desire it, as it is, I shall impart it. First, say some, the Lord Christ is not here said to buy those here spoken of, and who are said to bring destruction upon themselves, after the same manner or upon the like terms on which he is or may be said to buy those that are saved. These he buys for one end or with one intent, as viz. to adopt for sons; those, with another, as viz. for slaves and vassals only. I suppose the world never heard of such a purchase as this made by Jesus Christ till these latter days; I mean, of men only to make slaves and vassals of them. Certain I am that the Scripture makes Christ’s freemen and Christ’s servants or bondmen all one: “for he that is called in the Lord,” saith the apostle, “being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant or bondman,” 1 Cor. 7:22. And, indeed, it is the blessed liberty and freedom which we obtain by Christ that makes us his servants or bondmen, *i. e.* which engageth us to be such unto him: but if Christ buys men with the price of his blood only for slaves and vassals, I would know whether they come to the actual enjoyment of this privilege (for such it must needs be supposed, as by the context itself will appear presently), by faith, or without faith. It cannot be said that they come to the possession of it by faith, for by faith men are

put into the blessed relation of sons: “Ye are all the children of God,” saith the apostle, “by faith in Jesus Christ,” Gal. 3:26. If they should come to it without faith, then Christ should show more favour, at least in this respect, to his vassals than to his sons. His sons come not to the actual enjoyment of their privilege but by faith; but his slaves, it seems, may attain the actual enjoyment of theirs without the performance of this or any other condition whatsoever.

Again, If Christ bought wicked men, and such as perish, for slaves and vassals, I would know whether they act the parts of slaves and vassals, and so serve him in that capacity which he aimed at in his purchase of them, or whether they act contrary to the nature and laws of slavery or vassalage. If they act as slaves and vassals, then they answer and fulfil their Lord’s intentions and desires in his purchase, and so are not to be blamed, but commended rather. If it be said that they act otherwise, I mean, than as becometh slaves and vassals, this must be either by acting righteously or unrighteously. If it be by acting righteously that they transgress the law of slavery, then it follows that men may prove better, and live more holily, than Christ ever intended or desired they should. If it be by acting unrighteously, then Christ did not intend that those whom he bought for slaves should live unrighteously, but holily. If so, then were his intentions towards those whom he bought for slaves altogether as gracious as towards those whom he purchased for sons; his intentions towards and concerning these, in his purchase of them, being clearly this, that they should “serve him in righteousness,” Luke 1:74, 75.

Again, If Christ should buy some men for slaves and vassals, then, in case any of these, bought for such an end or with such an intention as this, should repent and believe, Christ should be not only disappointed in his bargain, but this by the righteousness of the persons bought or bargained for by him. To allege here, that it is impossible that any person who is bought for a slave should repent or believe, 1. Is absolutely untrue, there being no man but only he who hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost who is not in a capacity or possibility of repentance. 2. Though it were true, yet it hinders not at all the truth, or the force of the consequence in the proposition mentioned, viz. that in case any of those should repent whom Christ hath bought for slaves, then he should be disappointed in his bargain, and that by the righteousness of those bought by him. Reason teacheth us that a connex proposition may be

demonstratively true and pregnant, though both the parts of it be never so false; as, for example, if Ishmael had been the natural son of Lot, he could not have been the natural son of Abraham. This is a proposition of a manifest and clear truth, yet both parts of it are false: for, 1. Ishmael was not the natural son of Lot. 2. He was the natural son of Abraham. Yet,

Again, if Christ bought some for slaves, then hath he some base, servile, hard, or drudgery work to do, such as is not meet for sons to put their hand unto, for they have no need of slaves that have no servile or slavish work to do; but Christ hath no work to do but that which is honourable and worthy the most ingenuous of all his sons to do. "All the commandments of God," David saith, "are righteousness," Psal. 119:172. And a little before, "All thy commandments are truth," ver 151. Now Christ hath no more work to be done by men in the world than God hath, neither hath God any more than what is expressed and set forth in his commandments, and all these, as we heard from David, "are righteousness," *i. e.* requiring nothing but what is righteous and just for men to do, and consequently meet for sons, yea, chiefly for sons, or righteous ones, to do. Yea, God hath no need of any man's lie, or of any man's sin whatsoever. Therefore neither did Christ buy any for slaves.

Once more, If the persons here said to be bought by Christ, were bought by him for slaves, then must the apostle be conceived to extenuate their sin in denying him, by saying, that he bought them; whereas, by the emphatical carriage of the context it is evident, that his intent was by this consideration to aggravate that their sin, and set forth the heinousness, the high demerit, and provocation of it. He that buys men being slaves, to make them freemen, and set them at liberty, may well expect thanks and free service from them; and if they should not own such a person as their great benefactor, they deserve not only to be divested of that liberty, which this benefactor of theirs hath purchased for them, but to be subjected to a bondage seven times more grievous than that from which they were delivered. But if a man shall buy those that were slaves before, only to put them into a condition of worse slavery than that wherein they were, they are not to be blamed if they deny him to be any great benefactor to them. In like manner, if Christ shall be here said to buy the men spoken of for slaves only, he should buy them out of a more easy slavery, from under a lighter condemnation, only to put them into an harder bondage, and subject them to a greater condemnation; and,

consequently, their not owning him, or their denying him as any benefactor unto them, were no just matter of provocation to him, nor of displeasure from God. What is that state of bondage or misery, in any kind, out of which Christ may be said to buy those whom he is supposed to buy for slaves? And what is that estate of slavery unto which he subjecteth them, or into which he putteth them, by this purchase, or buying of them, that so we may compare them together? Doubtless that bondage and misery out of which these men can be supposed to be bought by Christ, is, in the utmost line and pitch of it, but an obnoxiousness or liableness to have been cast into hell-fire for their sin, committed in or contracted from Adam as soon as they were conceived or born, or the like; but that estate of slavery, whereinto (according to that interpretation of the place which we now oppose) they are bought, by being bought by Christ, is seven times more grievous than so. For, 1. Under this they are as liable to be thrown into hell-fire as in the other. Nay, 2. They are sure to be cast into hell-fire with much more guilt of sin upon them, than in their former condition they were capable of, and consequently to be so much the more grievously tormented for ever. Therefore their sin of denying Christ is so far from being aggravated by their being bought by him for slaves, that indeed it is extenuated, and brought to nothing by it; and, consequently, such an interpretation is diametrically opposite to the apostle's intent in the place.

Lastly, for this, If Christ bought the false teachers here spoken of, with other wicked men who in fine perish for slaves, in what respect or with what intentions may he be supposed to have bought such infants, who dying in their infancy, and before the committing of actual sin, are supposed through the want of the privilege of election to perish? Must we not have another device or notion whereby to form the intentions of Christ in his purchase of these? For it can at no hand of reason be said or thought that he bought these for slaves, inasmuch as he never intended that these should live so much as to a capacity of doing any work at all in one kind or other for him. If the assertors of the interpretation now ready to fall, shall think to relieve themselves at this point, by saying, That it is not necessary that Christ should at all mind such children in his purchase, so as to buy them in one kind or other, but may well be conceived only to leave them as he found them, I would demand of them only this, How then, or upon what account such children should enjoy the

benefit of life, though but for a short season, as for a month, two, &c., together with the comforts of life appropriate to their age, as nourishment, nursing, looking to, &c. If no consideration at all was had of such in the death and purchase of Christ, I would gladly understand what other friend they had to mediate with God for such things on their behalf: or whether God he so far well pleased with them without all mediation, as to indulge such mercies and comforts unto them?

Nor can it with any colour of reason be said, that Christ bought the persons here spoken of for slaves, or servants unto the saints, because, 1, As the sphere of the affairs of this world moves, the saints are rather servants unto the wicked than these to them.

“Thy seed,” saith God to Abraham, “shall he a stranger in a land that is not theirs: and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years,” Gen. 15:13. And, 2. Though there be a sense, wherein all things are said to be theirs (the saints’,) “All things are yours,” &c., 1 Cor. 3:22, &c., yet wicked men are in no other sense here said to be theirs, than that wherein Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, are said to be theirs. Therefore as it doth no ways argue, that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, were bought by Christ for slaves, because they are here said to be the saints’, *i. e.* for their service and benefit, so neither doth it prove that wicked or impenitent men were bought for slaves by him, because they are here said to be theirs also, or because in some sense they are or may be serviceable to them.

Some seem to grant upon the account of the Scripture in hand, that Christ did buy some reprobates; (*viz.* such as are spoken of herein, and afterwards more fully described in the chapter;) but, say they, this concludes not the question in hand, unless it can be shown, that there is the same reason of all reprobates. “For,” they say on, “the thing to be proved is, that Christ died equally for all and every man: and it is one thing to die for the reprobate in some sense, and to die for them with an intention and purpose to save them: and if Christ died for some, and but some, that perish in a manner not common to all and every man, it is manifest he died not equally for all men.” How unlike himself is the author in these passages? or what pen ever dropt such divinity as this, with that which follows in the same contexture of discourse besides? For, 1. Is it reasonable to demand a proof, That there is the same reason of all reprobates (*viz.* in all circumstances, or in every respect,) to evince this,



that Christ died equally for them all? Suppose some of them be greater sinners, and some lesser, and sufficient proof can be made, that Christ died for the greater sinners amongst them (which the author of the said passages plainly grants), is it a reasonable ground of denial that he died for the rest that they are lesser sinners than they? Or suppose there can be ten thousand differences shown between reprobates and reprobates, yet if there be none of them competent to evince a difference in the intentions of Christ, in or about his dying for them, they are all of them put together of no consideration at all, to prove that Christ died not equally for them, nor yet to infringe their assertion who affirm he did. As suppose some of them be tailors, others carpenters, a third part mariners, or the like, such differences as these, though never so many, are no ground whereon to conclude that Christ died not equally for them all.

Secondly. Whereas he makes this the state of the question between him and his antagonists, whether Christ died equally for all and every man or no; confident I am that this is a very palpable mistake, especially if by equally he means, as mean he must, if he means to speak congruously to the interest of his own discourse, intentions of procuring them by his death the actual enjoyment of equal conveniences, equal opportunities, equal accommodations in every kind for their respective salvations. For certainly no remonstrant was ever dissented to such a degree, as to hold that Christ intended in or by his death, to purchase any such uniformity of divine dispensations in the government of the world at the hand of God, that all and every man, for example, should enjoy a ministry of the same efficacy and power for conversion, edification, establishment, &c. or that all and every man should be disposed of unto callings equally free from, and equally subject unto, temptations, occasions, opportunities of sinning, &c., with twenty and ten particulars more of like consideration which might readily be instanced; nor was ever any contra-remonstrant engaged, or occasioned by any adversary to remonstrate against any such opinion as this. But the question between them touching the intentions of God and of Christ in his death was, whether God did not as truly, as really, as cordially intend the salvation of one man as another, considered as men, in or by Christ's death. That God, in his providential dispensations, putteth a difference between one man's spiritual opportunities and another's, doth at no hand argue any different intentions in Him towards the one and the other in Christ's

death, but may flow from several other principles or causes, as either from a different use and improvement in men of their original stocks of grace, or from different applications that have been made unto God by others, as in prayer, intercession, &c. in the behalf of some, in respect of others ; or from different respects borne by God to the parents or forefathers of some, in regard of their signal piety and serviceableness to his great name in their generations above others ; or lastly, from the wisdom of God in conjunction with his goodness in and about the government of the world, according unto which he judgeth it most expedient, as well for his own glory as for the comfort and equitable consideration of his saints, and such as walk before him with upright and perfect hearts, to make or to permit all that variety and disparity which is now seen in the world, in the spiritual conveniences or accommodations of men, some men's proportion and allowance in this kind being but the omer, and other men's the ephah, which the Scripture makes ten times larger than the other, *Exod. 16:36*. From some, or all of these considerations, and possibly from some others besides these, that inequality mentioned between men and men in the enjoyment of the means of grace may very probably arise, so that there is not the least colour of a necessity to resolve it into any difference of intentions in God in the death of Christ. And if difference of means vouchsafed unto men would argue different intentions in God touching their respective salvation in the atonement made by Christ's death, it will be found every whit as true that Christ died not equally for the elect themselves, as that he died not equally for all reprobates. Nay, if an estimate be made of the intentions of God in the death of Christ, concerning the salvations of men, by this rule it will be found that he bare more gracious intentions in the death of Christ towards many reprobates and their salvation, than towards many of the elect, or of those who in the end come to be saved. For nothing is more evident, than that many perish under greater and more excellent means of salvation than are vouchsafed unto many others, who yet are saved thereby. So that it is a reasoning of no value which concludeth that "Christ died not equally for all and every man, because all and every man have not the same means of salvation granted unto them," *Matt. 8:10; 15:28*; compared with *11:20, 21, &c.* Yet in what sense it is, at least, very probable, that all and every man have the same means of salvation vouchsafed unto them, shall be taken into consideration in due

place.

Thirdly. Whereas, the same author saith, “that it is one thing to die for the reprobate in some sense, and” (another, I suppose he means,) “to die for ‘them with an intention and purpose to save them. I verily believe that neither he nor any of his persuasion in the present controversy, are able to credit such a distinction, unless captiously and altogether irrelatively to the business in hand, understood either by the Scriptures or any solid reason. For I confess I am yet to learn where, in the Scriptures, Christ is said to die for any, for whose salvation he died not. It is true Christ died not so precisely or adequately for the salvation of any man, as not to die for the obtaining of many other good things also for them, which are not comprehended in salvation formally taken; and in this sense the distinction may be admitted, inasmuch as upon this account it amounts to no more but this, it is one thing to say that Christ died for the reprobate in some sense, *i.e.* for the obtaining of lesser mercies for them; and another, to say that he died for their salvation. I confess that these two assertions are not formally, and every ways the same, as lesser things and greater things, compared only between themselves, are not the same. But such a sense as this no ways accommodates the author’s discourse; therefore, his meaning, to make him speak like a man, must be, that to say that Christ died for the obtaining of some good things for reprobates, may, according to Scripture principles and grounds, stand and be justified; but to say that he died for the salvation of such men, cannot by these principles and grounds be evinced. But in this sense the said distinction hath not yet been, nor, I believe, ever will be, in the latter member of it made orthodox or sound upon such terms.

The said author, in process of the same discourse, to save his bottle of hay or stubble from being burnt in the fire of the Scripture in hand, advanceth another distinction, every whit as helpless that way as the former. “We confess,” saith he, speaking of the false teachers in the text before us, who bring swift destruction upon themselves, “that they were bought by the blood of Christ, because all these were fruits of Christ’s death, whereof they were made partakers.” But, a few lines after, he retracts upon the matter the substance of this his confession, by mincing it thus: “To these men their sins were remitted *in a sort*, in this world, and *in a sort* they were bought with the blood of Christ, but *inchoately* only, and as they tasted the word of life.” Such shifting, intricate, and

winding expressions as these, falling from the pens of grave and learned men, are the constant symptoms of a judgment distempered with some error, labouring and toiling in the service of it. But, First, who ever heard of sins remitted in a sort? or who is able to notion such an expression? what is that remission which is in a sort? If by remission of sins in a sort, he means remission of sins to a degree, or with some imperfection, this contradicts the generally received opinion of protestant divines, who admit no degrees, no magis and minus, in justification; still assigning this for one difference between justification and sanctification. If by remission in a sort, he means a conditional remission (which seems to be his meaning by an expression used a few lines before) I know no other sense can be made of the expression, but only this, or of this import, viz., that God forgiveth some men their sins upon such terms as to reserve a liberty unto himself of reversing or recalling that grant, in case of such or such an unworthiness in them afterwards. This I judge to be most orthodox and true, though not in relation to some men only, but with reference unto all, without exception, to whom God at any time granteth remission of sins in this world, (of which more before the close of this chapter,) yet this sense, I presume, no ways befriends the author's judgment in the controversy depending; so that the truth is, I know not what sense to make of his remission, of sins upon condition, and in a sort.

Secondly, Every whit as mysterious and uncouth to me as the former is that expression also of these men being bought with the blood of Christ in a sort. I wish that either some of the publishers of the discourse, or some other friend, either of the person or cause, or both, would explain it. For as for his own explication (so intended, I suppose) in the words following; "But inchoately only, and as they tasted the word of life," it is to me rather a further obscuration than explication. Were they bought with the blood of Christ inchoately only, and not perfectly? How then can this author say, in the passage next following, "That by promise he," God, "assured them of salvation, if they did believe?" and again, that "if they had unfeignedly believed in him, without question they should have been saved?" Would their believing have altered the intentions of God concerning them in the death of Christ? or cause them to have been bought by the blood of Christ, though they were not bought before? Or did God assure them of such a salvation, which never was, nor ever so much as intended to be purchased or procured for them? Doubtless, if so

be they should without question have been saved, in case they had unfeignedly believed, they were bought as perfectly and completely with the blood of Christ as any of the elect themselves, their unbelief notwithstanding; because their believing could not have procured or bought any other salvation to them, but only that which was fully and completely purchased and bought for them with the blood of Christ, without any dependence at all upon their faith. Therefore, unless we suppose that salvation was completely purchased for them by Christ in his death, we cannot say or suppose with truth, that in case they had believed, they should, without question, have been saved.

That which is behind, “And as they tasted of the word of life,” is yet more inaccessible to my understanding than any thing that went before. For how, or in what sense, with what congruity to a rational apprehension, can men be said to have been bought with the blood of Christ, as they tasted of the word of life? Surely the meaning is not that when or whilst they tasted of the word of life, they were so bought, (I mean with the blood of Christ,) nor that this their tasting of the word of life, was the formal or precise consideration under which Christ bought them, though the particle “ as ” frequently imports this consideration. As well the one as the other of these senses, are the abhorings of common sense itself; and besides, they are at enmity with the principles of the author relating to the business in hand. Nor am I conscious of any thing at all intended in the clause, unless, haply, this may be it; viz., that inasmuch as they tasted of the word of life, it is an argument that they were bought with Christ’s blood, *i. e.* that they were partakers in the fruit and benefit of Christ’s death, or that the intentions of God in the death of Christ extended thus far, or in this consideration, unto them. But can it enter into any reasonable man’s thoughts to imagine, that if this had been all which the Holy Ghost intended to say, viz., that God intended by the virtue or means of Christ’s death, to cause these men to taste of the word of life (especially with exclusion of all intentions in him to save them) that he would have expressed it by saying, that Christ bought them? Suppose a man should buy or procure such a quantity of meat and drink for a poor captive, as were sufficient to flourish him well and with good satisfaction two or three days, but should intend no such thing as to purchase his liberty, or redemption from captivity, will any man call this a buying or redeeming of the person of this man? It is a very strange thing to observe

with what importune, bold, and broad-faced absurdities, error sometimes, though in company and conjunction with modesty and soberness of judgment, will attempt an escape out of an exigency or strait. But further, to the point in hand, evident it is, as hath been already observed, that the apostle, in these words, “who bought them,” intends an emphatical aggravation of the sin of such teachers who should deny their Lord. Now, if there were nothing more intended in the said words, but only this, that their Lord procured this for them, that they should taste of the word of life, but intended nothing further or better than this to them, this would be so far from aggravating the sin mentioned, that it would rather ease and qualify it. For if there was nothing purchased for them by the Lord Christ, but only this tasting of the word of life, impossible it was for them to have obtained any thing more; weak and sinful man being in no capacity of obtaining more good in any kind than what a way hath been opened for him, in and by the death of Christ, to compass. Now, for a man to taste only of the word of life, and to be in no capacity of making any further progress in the way of salvation, nay, to be in no capacity of doing that by which he might be actually saved, no whit bettereth or sweeteneth any man’s condition, but makes it much worse and much more grievous than otherwise it would have been. “Better it had been,” saith our apostle afterwards in the same chapter, “for them not to have known the way of righteousness,” *i. e.* to taste of the word of life, “than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them which yet they must of necessity do, if they were in no capacity, under no possibility, of going forward, or of being saved. Now for a servant to deny or disclaim his Lord, in case he never intended to make his condition any whit better, but in many respects worse, is a far lesser and lighter sin (if any at all) than it would be to deny him, upon a supposition that he had never done any thing at all in relation to him, neither good nor bad. Therefore, this author is inextricably entangled with his exposition of the place in hand, and makes no earnings of it at all. He gives no tolerable account how those teachers, who brought swift destruction upon themselves, should be bought by Christ inchoately only, and in a sort, and not simply and absolutely, after the same manner, and upon the same terms that all other men, yea, the elect themselves, are bought by him.

Our English annotators, taking no notice of the former exposition of

the place, as being, it seems, to them inconsiderable, give us, instead thereof, our choice of two others; but both of them calculated likewise to serve the turn, not the truth. "The Lord that bought them," *i. e.* say they, "that gave a price sufficient for them, or by whom they professed that they were redeemed, and therefore they should not have denied him." But, for the former, we have once and again razed to the ground the polluted sanctuary of that distinction, which asserteth Christ's dying sufficiently for men, and yet denieth his dying intentionally for them. Besides, here to interpret that Christ died sufficiently for the persons spoken of, without supposing that he died intentionally also for them, is clearly to overthrow the apostle's intention in the words, and to turn his aggravation of the sin he speaks of, rather into an extenuation than otherwise. For he that shall pay that for the ease and benefit only of another, which was sufficient to have pleased and eased me also as well as him, and yet shall neglect me in such a payment, and leave me in misery, whenas he might, without the least trouble or charge to himself, above what he underwent upon another account, have relieved me, hath no cause to expect service or thanks from me, for such a payment: but I am the more excuseable if I neglect him, or refuse to own him as a friend, because he neglected me in my greatest extremity, and that when he had such a fair opportunity, of a miserable, to have made me a happy man, and might have done it without the least inconvenience to himself, more than what he voluntarily put himself upon for the sake of others, to whom he was no whit more beholden or engaged than unto me. It is a palpably importune and senseless conceit, to think that men are engaged in any bands of thankfulness or service unto Christ for dying sufficiently for them, unless he died intentionally also.

The latter exposition of the last-named authors was, that the Lord Christ is said to have bought these false teachers, because they professed themselves to have been bought by him. But, 1. Why do they not put such a gloss as this upon other places, where there is every whit as much reason to do it, as here? As when Paul saith, "For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation," 1 Thess; 5:9, &c. why do they not interpret here; "For God hath not appointed us," &c. *i. e. we profess* that God hath not appointed us, &c. So, when the same apostle saith, "That God hath purchased the church with his own blood," Acts 20:28, why do they not gloss here; "God hath purchased the church with, &c. *i. e. the*

church *professeth* herself thus purchased,” &c. Partiality in interpretation of Scripture is every whit as bad and unchristian, as in civil judicatures.

Secondly, The great sin by which these false teachers are said to bring swift damnation upon themselves, is said to be, their denying the Lord that bought them. If, then, they denied this Lord that bought them, how can these expositors say, that they professed themselves bought by him? If it be replied, they might formerly profess themselves bought by him, though afterwards they denied him, and the apostle may charge them with sin in their present denial of him, upon the account of their former profession; I answer, that if formerly they professed themselves bought by him, but were not indeed so bought, and afterwards coming to understand or apprehend the truth, viz. that they were not so bought, they are not at all to be blamed for denying themselves to have been bought by him, or for denying that he bought them. To deny that to be so which is not so, especially when a man verily believes and apprehends it not to be, is no man's sin. Or if it be further pleaded, in favour of the said gloss, that these false teachers might at the same time, when they professed themselves bought by Christ, deny him, viz. in a consequential way, as either by teaching such heretical doctrines, which overthrew his Godhead, manhood, &c, or else by an impious conversation; I answer, 1. That if they professed themselves bought by him, they could not lightly teach or hold forth any doctrine wherein they should deny, either his Godhead, manhood, satisfaction, or any other thing relating to him, without which he could not, in a rational way, have made such a purchase of them. Or, 2. If they did teach any such doctrine, it must be supposed that they did it unwittingly, and because they apprehended nothing in it of any inconsistency with their profession of being bought by Christ. For it is not to be thought that men will willingly and knowingly teach contradictions, or teach any opinion which they apprehend contradictory to what they daily profess to believe. Now, for a man unwittingly, and contrary to his intention and desire, to teach such a doctrine, which consequently involves, or leads unto an opinion that is dangerous and damnable, is nothing but what is incident to the best and most approved teachers, (as I could readily demonstrate by many instances,) and therefore not like to be a sin of such high provocation, as to bring swift damnation upon them. But, 3, and lastly, that the apostle doth not speak of any such denial of the Lord Christ by these false teachers, which is by



works or by wickedness of life and conversation, but of doctrine, is evident enough, by the express tenor and carriage of the words themselves. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying," &c. which clearly sheweth that the denial of the Lord, here charged upon false teachers, stood not in works but in words, in false, heretical and damnable teachings. Therefore they are not, they cannot be here said to have been bought by Christ, because they professed themselves to have been redeemed by him.

Some, to evade that mortal stroke, which the Scripture in hand reacheth to that opinion, which denieth a possibility of perishing in those who are truly bought and redeemed by Christ, not being satisfied with any of the former come-offs, have devised this. The Lord, say they, is said to have bought these false teachers, not because he really, indeed and in truth, bought them, but because in the opinion and judgment of men he had bought them: they were looked upon as persons redeemed and bought by him. And to credit this interpretation, they allege several texts where things or persons are said to be so or so, such or such, not because they were really that which they are said to be, but only because they were this in appearance, or according to the common estimate of men. As Matt. 9:13; John 9:39; Matt. 13:12; compared with Luke 8:18. But this colour is as faint as any of the former, and as easily washed off. And,

1. It is very questionable whether in any of these places, either things or persons receive any denomination merely from appearance or opinion of men. Many things might be argued, and that with much probability, in oppositum. But concerning the first of the places, most certain it is that there is no such notion to be found there. For that by the righteous, whom Christ saith that he came not to call to repentance, should be meant righteous only in show, *or* in the opinion of men, whether themselves or others, and not righteous truly and properly so called, contradicts the manifest and declared intentions of Christ's coming into the world, which are frequently avouched and found to be the calling of sinners of all sorts, kinds, and degrees unto repentance; and therefore of hypocrites also, as well as others, and of persons conceited in the highest of their own righteousness. See Matt. 3:7, &c.; 1 Tim. 1:12—15, compared with Phil. 3:6, &c. (to omit many other places of like import). Besides, the occasion and tendency of our Saviour's words are of pregnant eviction,

that by righteous he means persons truly such, and not in conceit or opinion only. He was charged as with matter of undue deportment in eating with publicans and sinners. For his justification he pleads, that the whole have no need of a physician, but the sick; meaning, that as the calling of the physician is no ways necessary, in respect of those that are strong, healthful, and sound, but only of the sick; so neither had his coming into the world been of any such necessity, as now it was, but for sinners; and that had men been righteous and spiritually sound, there had been no need of his coming unto them. And therefore as a physician is not to be blamed for conversing with the sick, inasmuch as the nature and end of his calling requires his presence with them, and not with those that are sound; so neither was he to be blamed for being in the company of sinners, seeing the great end and intent of his calling to the office of a Saviour was not to save or to be helpful unto such as were righteous, who upon such an account stood in no need of him, but to administer comfort and help unto sinners, who without help from him must needs perish. Now certain it is, that the righteous whom Christ compares unto the whole, who in that respect need no physician, are not men righteous in show or in opinion only, for these stand in as much or more need of the physician than others; but those that are truly and sincerely righteous. Therefore this. Scripture holds no intelligence with that interpretation of the other, which is now under censure. But,

2. Be it granted for truth, that things and persons sometimes receive appellations only from an appearance of what they are called, or from the opinion of men judging them such; yet such a line of interpretation as this is not to be stretched over what Scriptures we please, nor indeed over any but where the manifest, exigency of the context calls for it. Otherwise we shall entitle men to a liberty of substituting shadows and appearances only, instead of realities and substances of truth, where and when they please; and so to turn the mind and counsels of God in the Scriptures upside down. The contest of old between Hierome and Austin about Paul's reproving Peter, Gal. 2., is of notable consideration to the business in hand. Hierome pleaded, that when Paul reproved Peter at Antioch, he did it not seriously or in good earnest; but affirmed, that these two apostles out of a kind of prudent charity agreed to make a show of a contest between them, when as indeed there was none. But how gravely and copiously doth Austin declare against and argue down such a

licentiousness of interpreting ? “ The Scripture,” saith he, “plainly saith, that Peter was worthy reproof, or to be condemned. If then we are to take this liberty, or boldness, to say, that indeed and in truth he did not amiss, but only dissembled for the sake of those that were weak, then the apostle Paul lies, in saying that he was worthy blame or reproof. Admit this,” saith this learned father, “and down falls all the authority and certainty of the Scriptures. For if they speak that which is false in one place, who can make it good that they speak truth in another ?” This is the brief of that famous dissertation between those two worthies in the Christian chinch. From whence it may appear of what dangerous consequence it is to expound that which the Scripture simply and plainly delivers as a truth, as spoken by way of appearance or human opinion only, when there is no apparent necessity enforcing such an exposition. And if there be some places which will bear or which call for such a figurative and catachrestical interpretation as this, they are but few; and those which are, must be discerned and distinguished from others by the manifest exigency of their respective scopes and imports, the least jot or tittle of which character is not to be found in the place in hand. For,

3. and lastly, Most evident it is, as hath been formerly also observed, and as many expositors, more than enough addicted to the contra-remonstrant opinion, themselves acknowledge, that the apostle’s intent here is, to set forth the most heinous and horrid indignity of the sin of these false teachers in denying their Lord, by this aggravating consideration, that they deny such a Lord who bought them. Now, if it be supposed that this Lord really, and of love and good will to them, and out of a desire to free them from misery, bought or redeemed them, the consideration is of great pregnancy and force to demonstrate horrible ingratitude and impiety in them to deny him. But if on the contrary it be supposed, that he did not buy them with any intent to free them from their misery, but only make a show of such a thing, or only do that which might occasion men to think or to believe that he did so, this manifestly easeth and qualifies the guilt of their sin in denying him; and so is manifestly repugnant to the apostle’s scope. For to make a show of love only, or to do that by which other men may be invited to think that a real kindness is done for such or such a man, when as indeed there is nothing done of any such consideration, nor ever intended to be done, doth no ways oblige this man in thankfulness unto him who accommodates him

upon no better terms, but is rather a just ground of a harder and worse opinion of him.

If it be replied ; Yea, but these false teachers knew nothing but that they were truly and really bought by Christ, and that out of a desire of saving them; nor had they any sufficient reason to judge otherwise. Therefore their sin in denying him is no ways eased upon this account, that he did not indeed buy them with any such intent or desire, because, 1. Men are bound to judge, as they have reason to judge ; and, 2. Are bound to act or practise according to their judgments; I answer,

There can be no sufficient ground for any man to believe that which is false, nor ought such a thing to be believed; at least with confidence of belief, or with any such belief, upon which he shall stand bound to engage in any material and weighty action or practice. Therefore if Christ did not really buy these false teachers, they could have no sufficient ground to believe that he did ; at least to believe at any such rate of confidence, as rather to suffer the loss of any considerable good than deny it. If it be again replied, A man may stand bound to venture much upon probabilities, in many cases, though there be no certainty or truth in that which upon such probabilities he doth believe, I answer, possibly a man may indeed stand bound, in point of wisdom or prudence, in some cases to adventure much, in a simple consideration, upon probabilities only; but not in point of conscience. As for example, a merchant or other man may stand bound in point of wisdom to adventure some considerable part of his state in a way of trade beyond the seas, upon probabilities only of a gainful return; though even in this case, upon a more exact consideration, it will appear that such a man doth not make this adventure upon any mere probability, one or more, but upon that which is certain. For the probability of a good return in this case is a certainty to him; he knows certainly, and beyond all doubt or question, that it is a thing probable or likely that he shall receive such a return, though he knows not certainly, but only probably, that he shall indeed receive it. Now the true ground upon which the merchant adventures is not the knowledge that he shall, or will gain by his adventure ; for it is impossible for him to know this; but the knowledge and consideration of the likelihood of his gaining, which, as hath been said, he may, and doth know, and that certainly.

You will upon this say, it is like, The false teachers, in the Scripture in hand, had, or might have had, such a certainty as this, that the Lord

Christ did really buy them ; for it was very probable that he had so bought them, in regard of that illumination, external sanctification, and other gifts, whereof they were partakers; and consequently their sin in denying him was never the less upon any such account as this, that he had not indeed bought them: inasmuch as they were bound to believe that he had so bought them, and to behave themselves towards him accordingly. I answer,

1. Upon this supposition, that Christ did not indeed buy, or had not bought them, they could have no probability, no not upon their illumination, or outward gifts whatsoever, that he had, or should have so bought them; especially taking in the opinion of those against whom we manage our present discourse, viz., that Christ truly bought no more than come to be actually saved. For, 1. If those truly bought by Christ be but very few in number, comparatively with those who were passed by, and not so bought by him, then no particular man, thus far, (I mean, as he is a member of mankind, or one of the generality of men,) can have so much as a probable ground that he is one of those so bought by him. As when there are twenty, or forty blanks in a lottery, and only one prize, it is not probable or likely that he that draweth but once shall draw the prize. For it is twenty or forty to one that he shall not draw it. 2. Neither doth the receiving of illumination, or any other common gift, upon the former supposals, make it probable unto any man, that Christ truly bought him, because very many receive illumination, at least in the sense of our opposers, &c., who live wickedly; and many also who fall away from that external sanctity, wherein they walked for a season. And our Saviour himself saith, that “ Many are called, but few are chosen,” Matt. 20:16; and again, that upon the “ abounding of iniquity,” viz., in fierce and bloody persecutors, “ the love of many shall wax cold,” Matt. 24:12; and yet again, that “ Many that are first, shall be last,” Matt. 19:30; to omit many other passages of like import. Therefore, no external or common gifts whatsoever, make it so much as probable unto any man, that he was truly bought by Christ, there being very many thus gifted, who will not in the end be saved. But,

2. Suppose our false teachers had probable grounds, from their illumination, &c., to believe that Christ had truly bought them, yet this probability, upon the premises last argued, could be but very faint, and mingled with much jealousy and fear of the contrary; and consequently

nothing so binding upon them to own and honour him in the world as a certain knowledge, free from the pain and torment of fear of the contrary, that he had so bought them, would have been. So that though it should be yielded, which yet there is no sufficient reason to do, that the interpretation which we now oppose, doth not turn up by the very roots the drift and scope of the apostle in the place and words, yet it shakes them terribly, and leaves little spirit, strength, or force in them. If the merchant judged it forty, twenty, yea, or but ten to one odds, that in case he should venture, he should never have any return of what he ventures, he would have but slender encouragement, and so little list to follow his sea trade with his whole estate upon such terms. Whereas certainty of returns with considerable gain, would the providence of God, and condition of human affairs bear it, would multiply merchants without end; and withal render those very weak and unlike men, who, having means and opportunity to follow such an employment, should either be slothful and sit still, or else dispose of their estates in any other way, wherein little or no improvement could be expected. In like manner, a certainty of knowledge that Christ truly and really bought a man with his blood, is a high and sacred engagement upon this man to acknowledge, own, and honour him as his great and blessed Lord and benefactor, in the sight of the world; and consequently renders him the reproach and abomination of men, in case he shall be ashamed of him, or deny him: whereas a faint apprehension only of such a thing done for him, entangled and encumbered with a thousand questions, fears, and doubtings, hardly extricable, whether it was indeed done or no, makes the denial or disowning of him, if not pardonable, yet much more excusable, and of far lighter provocation and demerit, than in the other case it would be.

Thus then at last we see, that no interpretation will sit with any tolerable closeness or congruity to the words and scope of the Scripture in hand, but only that which acknowledgeth the false teachers mentioned therein, truly, really, absolutely, and completely redeemed or bought by Christ, I mean after the same manner, and upon the same terms of love on God's part, after, and upon which those were redeemed and bought by him, who in the issue and event come to be saved. As for that objection, which lies in many men's thoughts against such an interpretation as this, as viz., that if Christ truly redeemed or bought any man, he must of

necessity at last be saved; we shall, God assisting, give a fair, clear, and satisfactory answer unto it, when we come to answer the arguments insisted upon, for the proof of the contrary doctrine to that which is maintained in the present discourse. But for that which some plead against the interpretation asserted, from Revel, 14:4, where those that are said to be redeemed or bought GREEK, from men, are termed the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb, and are said to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, which implieth their actual salvation; the answer unto it is easy. For evident it is, from the description of the persons here spoken of, that they are such, not simply who were redeemed and bought by Christ, but who also truly believed in him, and persevered in faith and love unto the end; and consequently such, in whom the work of redemption performed by Christ obtained its ultimate and plenary efficiency and end. In which respect they are said, in a kind of emphatical manner, to be GREEK, to have been redeemed, or bought, from men, or from amongst men, i. e. persons in whom the common redemption vouchsafed by Christ took place, and wrought to that great and signal differencing and distinguishing of them from other men, that whereas the grace of this redemption was buried under other men's wickedness and unbelief, and at last, in their destruction, it prevailed and magnified itself in the constant faith and holiness of these, and at last triumphed gloriously in their salvation. Whereby it came to pass, that these only seemed to have been redeemed amongst men, all others miscarrying, as if they had not been redeemed. So that there is nothing at all, scarce so much as an appearance of any thing, in this Scripture, against that interpretation of the other, for the establishing of which, way hath been made through the fall of many others.

And doubtless he that shall attentively and with consideration read what Calvin himself hath commented upon the place, must needs judge him very compliant with the said interpretation. "Although," saith he, "Christ may be denied several ways, yet, in my judgment, Peter means that which is expressed in Jude, viz., when the grace of God is turned into wantonness. For Christ hath redeemed us, that he might have a people separated from all the defilements of the world, addicting itself unto holiness and innocency. Wherefore *they who, shaking off the bridle, cast themselves forward into all manner of licentiousness, are not without cause said to deny Christ, by whom they were redeemed.* So then, that

the doctrine of the gospel may abide with us safe and sound, let this be always fixed in our minds, that we are redeemed by Christ, that he may be the Lord both of our lives and deaths." In this piece of commentary there are several passages which plainly declare the author's judgment to have been, at least when he wrote these things, that those are, and may he said to be redeemed by Christ, and that after the same manner that the saints themselves are redeemed, who yet may in the end perish. For, 1. In saying Christ hath redeemed us, questionless he includes himself, and all the godly, at least, that heard him or shall read these things. Now if he should mean that either himself or other godly ones were redeemed with any other kind of redemption than that spoken of in the text before him, viz., wherewith the false teachers, there mentioned, were redeemed, his commentaries should be quite besides the text.

2. He saith expressly, that "they who, shaking off the bridle, cast themselves forward, or headlong, into all manner of licentiousness, are not without cause said to deny Christ, by whom they were redeemed." Now, who are they that bring swift destruction upon themselves, but such as he here describes, and whom he supposeth to have been redeemed by Christ, and that with the same redemption whereof he had spoken immediately before, viz., wherewith himself and other godly ones had been redeemed? For to make him speak of two several kinds of redemption specifically distinct, in one and the same passage, without giving the least notice of any distinction or difference at all between them, is to suppose him to equivocate, and to make him a transgressor of the known principles and rules of writing.

3, and lastly, When he exhorts, "let this always be fixed in our minds, that we are redeemed by Christ, that he may be the Lord of," &c. He cannot be supposed to address or speak only to those that were, or are truly godly, but to all those, at least, who judge themselves such; yea, clear it is, that he speaks to all persons professing Christianity, without exception. Nor can he be supposed to invite or persuade any man to fix that in his mind, which is every whit as likely, if not much more likely, to be false than true, but only that which is most certainly and unquestionably true. Therefore he clearly supposeth, that all persons, who upon any terms or grounds whatsoever judge themselves godly, yea, that all professors of Christianity, without exception, are redeemed by Christ; and consequently, that as well those who perish as those that are



saved, are redeemed by him; there being nothing more certain than that many who profess Christianity, yea, and who call themselves godly, will perish.

From henceforth then let no man put the doctrine maintained in this discourse to any such rebuke as this, that it was never held or countenanced by any divine of the order surnamed orthodox; we find the principal of this order, Calvin himself I mean, besides many others of name and note amongst them, once and again, yea, seven times over, very freely giving the right hand of fellowship unto it.

We have been somewhat long in our vindication of the Scripture last argued; but the restless and endless importunity of men in persuading the Scriptures to entreat their darling error kindly, together with the difficulty of the Scriptures to be so persuaded, hath compelled us. But it is very incident to men to do by the Scriptures as they do by themselves. "God," saith Solomon, "hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions," Eccles. 7:29. So may it be truly said, that God hath made many Scriptures upright, plain, clear, obvious for sense and meaning ; but men are wont to seek out many inventions to perplex or misfigure this meaning, that it may not be known to oppose their fond conceits and imaginations.

The next Scripture of the consort designed for this chapter was 2 Pet. 2:20: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them , than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Here likewise it is most irrefragably and clearly supposed, that men who have been truly sanctified and regenerated, and consequently redeemed by Christ, may yet decline so as to perish in the end. For to deny that that expression of escaping the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, doth import true sanctification, or regeneration, is to deny that the sun is up at noon-day. For if the persons here said to have "escaped the pollutions of the world, through," &c., shall not be supposed truly and inwardly sanctified, &c., but only superficially and externally, they must be supposed withal, 1. To have been all this while in the midst of that greatest "pollution of the world," and which pollutes all other

things unto men, (Tit. 1:15,) unbelief. 2. To have been in the inward bent and frame of their minds and wills as much addicted to all other the pollutions hereof as at any time formerly. 3, and lastly, To have been all this while most damnable hypocrites and dissemblers. Now that the Holy Ghost should say, that unbelievers, persons inwardly full of all wickedness and filthiness, most vile hypocrites and dissemblers, have “escaped the pollutions of the world,” especially “through the knowledge” (or rather acknowledgment, GREEK) “of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is to me, and I think to all other impartially considering men, the first-born of incredibilities. Can a man be said to have escaped his enemies when he still remains under their power, and is in greater danger of suffering mischiefs from them than ever before? Or is not he, who being enlightened, retains the truth in unrighteousness, remains inwardly full of malice and wickedness, only garbing himself with an hypocritical outside, or mere profession of holiness, as much or more under the power and command of sin, as likely to perish everlastingly for sin, as ever he was, or could be before his illumination ? For that, during that condition of escape, of which the Holy Ghost here speaks, from first to last, the men spoken of were inwardly full of all filthiness and wickedness, and consequently vile hypocrites and dissemblers, our adversaries themselves confess in their managing this Scripture, though as they suppose to their advantage. Evident it is, say they, that all the while they were free from the pollutions of the world, they were still dogs and swine, and if so, as inwardly vile and wicked as ever, because it is said of them, ver. 20, “But it is happened to them according to the true proverb; the dog is returned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” But of this more anon.

2. That which is here expressed to be the cause or means of their escape or deliverance from the pollutions of the world, their knowledge (or acknowledgment rather, which is somewhat more) of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, plainly evinceth it to have been such an escape, which is inward, cordial, and real, in conjunction with true sanctification, and not external, formal, or in show and pretence only. There is scarce any thing more frequent or familiar in the Scriptures than the ascribing of justification, sanctification, yea, and salvation itself to the knowledge, sometimes of God, sometimes of Christ, sometimes of both. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant” (saith Isaiah, speaking of Christ)

“justify many, Isa. 53:11. “By his *knowledge*” i. e., as interpreters generally, by his being known. “He calls that,” saith Musculus, “the knowledge of Christ, not wherewith he himself knoweth, hut whereby he is known by us.” The apostle Paul speaks of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, as one of the principal ends of that evangelical ministry which was by special grace given unto and is continued in his church, and joins it with the “perfection of the saints,” Eph. 4:12, 13; and. afterwards in the same chapter, ver. 20, 22, &c., ascribes the “putting off the old man,” and the “renewing in the spirit of our minds,” unto it. The apostle John makes no scruple to pronounce him a liar, who shall say that he *knoweth Christ*, and yet “keepeth not his commandments,” 1 John 2:4. And again, that “whosoever sinneth” (*i. e.* lives wickedly) “hath not seen him, neither *known* him,” 1 John 3:6. That of our Saviour himself to this purpose is well known, “This is life eternal, that they *know* thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ,” John 17:3. It were easy to multiply places of like import. Therefore certainly that obedience, that sanctification, that conformity in life and conversation to the word and will of God, which is begotten and raised in men by the knowledge, much more by the acknowledgment, or thorough knowledge (which the word GREEK seems to import) of “the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is cordial obedience, true and real sanctification, and conformity to the will of God.

3, and lastly, If the escape and deliverance from “the pollutions of the world” here spoken of, was not inward, real, and accompanied with true sanctification, &c., how could the persons be in danger of an after-entanglement therewith, especially of an inward entanglement, and wherewith the heart should be ensnared, which yet the Holy Ghost evidently implieth they were, ver. 14, in ascribing unto them a “heart exercised with covetousness,” or of being overcome? at least, how should their conditions be rendered so much more grievous and dreadful by any such entanglement than they were under the escape, as the Holy Ghost here clearly supposeth? If the escape here mentioned, importeth not true and real sanctification, the persons escaping must of necessity be supposed, all the time of this their escape, to have been “in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,” and particularly to have been both hypocrites and unbelievers. Now our Saviour himself supposeth hypocrites and unbelievers to be the first-born children of hell, and of

“the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever,” in those two sayings of his, compared, viz. Matt. 24:51, with Luke 12:46. The tenor of the former is this: “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with *hypocrites*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Of the latter, this: “The lord of that servant .... will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with *unbelievers*.” If hypocrites and unbelievers be of the first and primary designation for hell and eternal destruction (which the said passages clearly import), they cannot lightly through any apostasy whatsoever contract any worse or more grievous condition than their present condition is. The truth is, that I know no apostasy, of which a hypocrite or unbeliever is properly capable, but only that which is from Belial unto Christ, or from Satan unto God.

All that the adversaries of the interpretation given, (and who will not acknowledge the escape here mentioned to imply any thing more than a mere formal and outside sanctification,) are able to plead from the words or context for themselves, is only that which hath been already touched, ver. 22, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow,” &c. From hence they conclude, that as a dog is a dog, retains the same nature whilst his vomit and he are parted which he had before: and so a sow or a swine is the self-same creature inwardly, washed and unwashed; so were the persons resembled to these creatures, the same men in the inward frame and constitution of their hearts, even whilst they had made the escape here spoken of from the “pollutions of the world,” which they were before; therefore not truly sanctified or regenerate,

But how weak this allegation is, sufficiently appears by the foundation on which it is built, which is this, that parables or similitudes run upon all fours, or that all things whatsoever found in the things resembling, are applicable also to the things resembled. God, in hearing the importunate and restless cries of his saints, is compared to an unrighteous judge, who though neither fearing God nor regarding man, was notwithstanding overcome with the widow’s importunity to do her justice. Now, to infer from hence, that because this unjust judge remained still unjust, even whilst he did justice to the poor widow, therefore God also, being compared to him, was unjust whilst he heard the prayers of his saints, would be an inference blasphemously ridiculous. Of no whit better

calculation is that collection mentioned, wherein, because men sometimes clean, and afterwards polluted, are compared in respect of such a change, to a dog returning to his vomit, and a washed sow to her wallowing in the mire; it is argued, that therefore during their cleanness, they must needs be, inwardly and in disposition, like unto these creatures ; besides, supposing the persons here spoken of to have been dogs and swine, 1 mean inwardly unclean and impure before the alteration here ascribed to them, the proverb of the dog returning to his vomit, &c. may in sufficient propriety of speech be applied unto them, without any supposal that under that alteration they should be dogs also. Suppose a dog should by casting up his gorge or vomit be turned into a sheep, and afterwards should by a contrary means, viz. by resuming it, become a dog again, might it not truly and properly enough be said, that this dog, though lately a sheep, is now become a dog again ? But the impertinency of the plea now impleaded, may be any man's vision that will but narrowly and impartially look upon it. Yea,

Calvin himself, it seems, was so far unsatisfied with it, that he could not own the interpretation attempted by it, but crosseth over the way to the other interpretation. "This," saith he upon verse 22, " is that in brief that Peter would say, that the Gospel is physic which purgeth us with a wholesome vomit, but withal that there are many dogs, who to their destruction, resorb or resume what they have vomited up. And again, that the Gospel is a laver, which washeth away all our uncleannesses ; hut there are many swine, who soon after their washing tumble themselves in the mire. In the meantime, the godly are admonished to take heed of both, unless they mean to be reckoned amongst dogs and swine." If men, like dogs, may resume that to their destruction, which they have vomited or cast up, certainly when they had thus vomited, and till such a resorption, they were sound and in a condition of salvation. A man cannot reasonably be said to take any thing to his destruction who had that in him before, which was a greater and more certain means to destroy him. Nor need godly men be admonished of any thing, as like or possible to bring them into the account of dogs or swine, if such a transition be supposed to be impossible to them. Therefore, doubtless, Calvin resents much better that exposition of the place in hand, which supposeth the escape specified therein to include an inward and real sanctification, than that which resolves it into smoke and wind, I mean an

external, formal, hypocritical sanctification.

Another Scripture ranged in the same division with the former, is of much the same consideration with them. “ Of how much sorer punishment,” said the apostle, “ shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace ?” Heb. 10:29. To say that this Scripture, with the former, doth not speak of a true and real sanctification, but of that only which is outsidely, seemingly; and hypocritically such, is to claim a mere arbitrary power for interpreting the Scriptures.

For, 1. The word here translated, “sanctification,” is the same with that which our Saviour useth, John 17:17, where in the behalf of his disciples he prayed thus unto his Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is the truth.” If neither reason nor religion suffereth us here to interpret that Christ prayed unto the Father to sanctify his disciples outwardly, formally, seemingly only, but really and in truth, I would gladly know which of the two, or whether both, lead us to understand any other sanctification in the place in hand.

2. No one instance, I verily believe, can be brought throughout all the Scripture, where men are said to be sanctified by Christ, by the blood of Christ, by the knowledge of Christ or the like ; but that the place is to be understood of a true, sound, and saving sanctification. But places of this interpretation are many, 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Eph. 5:25, 26 ; Heb. 13:12, &c.

3. There is this reason evincing with a high hand that the Scripture before us speaketh of an inward, real, and soul sanctification, viz. that the sin of the person here said to have been sanctified, in counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, *i. e.* in despising or profaning it, is aggravated by this consideration, that he was sanctified by it. The carriage of the verse clearly, and above all contradiction, evinceth this. Now, then, if we shall suppose that this person had received no more good, no greater benefit by this blood of the covenant, but only to be made an hypocrite or a dissembler by it, which must be affirmed, if the sanctification here attributed unto him be only a feigned or formal sanctification ; this is so far from aggravating that sin of his in despising it, that it doth very much, if not altogether, extenuate and excuse it.

Nor can it be here pretended, with reason, that it was not the fault, nor any defect in the blood of the covenant, that he was not truly and really

sanctified, but his own negligence and falseness of heart. For though it be true, that the reason why any man, especially enjoying the Gospel, proves a hypocrite, is not any deficiency in the blood there presented unto him by way of antidote, and for his cleansing, but his own negligence and unfaithfulness to his own soul, yet the sanctification spoken of in the Scripture in hand, is not attributed to the looseness or hollow-heartedness of the person in whom it was found, but to the blood of the covenant itself. Now that which is the proper and genuine effect of this blood, cannot be any hypocritical or mere outside thing; and, however, were this sanctification an hypocritical or mere outside thing, and so an occasional effect only of the blood of the covenant, yet would the consideration hereof be no just or fitting matter, whereby to aggravate the sin of him that should despise this blood. Though I may be guilty, and an offender in a high degree to remain an hypocrite or a false-hearted man, under means so efficacious and proper to make me sound and upright-hearted, as the Gospel and the blood of the covenant held forth therein are, yet the consideration of my remaining a hypocrite in this case, is no ground why I should be judged, either by myself or others, the greater sinner for despising these means. It is rather an extenuation, as hath been said, of my sin in this kind than otherwise, to consider that though this blood of the covenant be a very efficacious and proper means to make me sound-hearted and sincere, yet it is not so efficacious and powerful in this kind as actually to subdue and overcome the hypocrisy and wickedness of my soul, without mine own endeavours in concurrence with it. Therefore, certainly the apostle would never instance in a counterfeit, unsound, or imperfect sanctification, wrought or occasioned by the blood of the covenant, to aggravate the sin of such a person who should despise it, by apostatising from the profession of it. But,

4, and lastly, Suppose the Scripture in hand should be conceived to speak of an outward, formal sanctification, which consists in a civil or moral reformation of the outer man, (which yet the scope of the place will at no hand, as hath been argued, admit,) yet it sufficiently reacheth, in point of proof, that which is intended from it, viz. that Christ died for those that perish: for this sanctification, of what kind soever it be—be it shadow, or be it substance—is ascribed to “the blood of the covenant,” (*i. e.* the blood of Christ, wherein God covenanteth life and salvation unto the world upon their believing,) as the efficient cause or means of it: therefore this

blood, howsoever, was shed for those that may and do perish.

If it be said, It is true it was shed for such men with such an intent on God's part as this, that they should be externally cleansed by it, and outwardly sanctified, but not that they should be really and internally sanctified, or, in fine, saved by it; I answer,

1. That the strength of this objection hath been already trodden down in this chapter. 2. I here add, that if God intended an external sanctification only, by the death of Christ, for the persons mentioned in the objection, then were his intentions in Christ's death, in reference to these men, rather grievous than gracious; bent upon the aggravation and increase of their condemnation, not upon the advance of their salvation; and Christ himself should come unto them, not that they "might have life more abundantly," but that they might have hell and death more abundantly; whereas most certain it is that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world," much less to increase the condemnation of the world, "but that the world," that is, (as we formerly made good the interpretation, chap, 5.,) the generality of men, "might be saved." 3. And lastly, if Christ died for these men to invest them with an external sanctification, to make them outwardly holy, I would know whether, together with this outward sanctification, he did intend to procure for them by his death an inward principle answerable to it, out of which it should flow. If so, if he did intend to procure by his death an inward suitable principle for these men, out of which that outward sanctification should flow, then certainly he did intend to procure them a true and real sanctification; for what can we imagine a true and real sanctification should be more than a righteous, blameless, innocent, Christian conversation, issuing from an inward principle suitable to it? If it be said, No, Christ did not intend by his death to procure for these men any such inward principle as you speak of, but only that outward conformity to, the ways and laws of Christian religion, then it will follow that Christ died with an intention to make men hypocrites, or to procure hypocrisy for men; because a fair show in outward practices and religious deportments, without an inward principle and frame of heart answerable to them, and which ariseth out of a hollow and unsanctified heart, is hypocrisy, and that in the plainest and most obvious signification of the word. Therefore, certainly, Christ did not shed his blood to purchase any such sanctification for men which some conceive to be meant in the Scripture



in hand. Christ, in dying for men, intended nothing for men but that which is true, real, and saving in the nature and proper tendency of it. Intentions of making men hypocrites or Christians by halves, in one kind or other, are more fitting for Satan than for Christ. How little danger there is, or rather, what precious advantage there is for the comfort, peace, and edification of true Christian souls, in that interpretation of this place, which, by sanctification, understands a true and real sanctification, above any thing that is in the contrary, we shall, God willing, demonstrate in the next chapter.

In the meantime I desire the reader will please to understand this, that the interpretation asserted, and which understands the Scripture in hand of a true and real sanctification, is no slip of remonstrantism, but attested by very orthodox men, as the word now ruleth. Calvin himself writeth nothing upon the place but of good accord with it. "By a comparison of the benefits," saith he, speaking of what men received by Moses under the law, and what Christians now under the gospel receive by Christ, "he aggravates the ingratitude of men. It is a very unworthy thing to profane the blood of Christ, which is the matter" (he means, the principal or most material cause) "of *our sanctification*. Yet this they do who apostatise from faith." A little after: "But he," the apostle, "takes notice of the manner how the covenant is confirmed unto us, when he saith, 'We are sanctified;' because the blood shed would profit us nothing unless we were watered" or sprinkled "therewith by the Holy Ghost. From hence cometh expiation and holiness with much more to the like purpose in this commentary. Whereby evident it is, that this author, by the sanctification mentioned in the text, understands no other than that which was in himself, and which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the saints by watering or sprinkling them with the blood of Christ.

"By which he was sanctified;" *i. e.*, say our English divines, in their annotations upon the place, "by which their sins were pardoned in regard of that meritorious sufficient sanctification purchased by it;" sending us back to their note on verse 10 of this chapter, where they interpret the word "sanctified" as signifying "our being freed from the guilt of our sin, and consecrated to God's service." So that there is little question but that these also understand the place to speak of a true sanctification indeed, and which either is, or flows from justification itself. And, long before them both, Chrysostom interpreted the place as speaking of such a

sanctification which appertains to a son or child of God. “God,” saith he, “hath made thee a son; and wilt thou be willing to be made a servant?”

The last of the Scriptures produced, to prove that Christ died even for those also who perish, as well as others, was Matt, 18:32, 34. The tenor and carriage of this is of like consideration with the three last opened: excepting only, that whereas those speak of sanctification, this speaks of justification. The passages now to be insisted on lie in the body of a parable, which is somewhat large: the reader may please to peruse the whole in the evangelist. The particulars in it for our purpose are contained in these words. “Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou, also, have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So, likewise, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” In these words we hear of a servant to whom his lord and master had freely forgiven all that debt which he owed unto him, which, as we find in the former part of the parable, was a vast sum of ten thousand talents, fit to typify or represent that great debt of eternal sufferings, which every man owes for sins and trespasses, unto God. And yet we hear, also, that this same servant, by provoking this gracious lord and master of his by unmercifulness and cruelty to one of his fellow-servants, forfeited his former grace and mercy, which he had received from him in the forgiveness of his great debt, and that this forfeiture was taken by his lord, and he delivered by him to the tormentors, or prison-keepers, until he should pay the whole debt, *i. e.* for ever, inasmuch as he had not, nor was ever able to procure, wherewith to make such a payment. What was intended and signified by all this is clearly expressed by our Saviour, in those last words which contain the application, and are the close of the parable: “So, likewise, shall my heavenly Father,” &c. From which words the clear and direct scope and intent of the parable sheweth itself to be this, *viz.* to give the world to know and understand, that if men, who have obtained forgiveness of sins by the means and grace of Jesus Christ, shall so far sin against the excellency and richness of this grace, as to deal cruelly and unmercifully by men, this act of grace towards them shall be cancelled and revoked, and the debt of their sins shall return and recoil

again upon them. Yea, he plainly tells his disciples themselves, (for this parable was in special manner directed unto them, as appears from the beginning of the chapter,) that they themselves must not look to be exempted from this law of the righteousness and equity of God. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you," or even unto you, notwithstanding any privilege you may seem to have above other men, by being my disciples; he will neither deal better nor worse with you, but just as this lord did by that wretched and most unthankful servant of his, if you provoke him after the same manner, *i. e.* "if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." That great grace of forgiveness of sins, under which you now stand, will be reversed and called in again, by him that hath given it you, if you shall so far tread and trample the glory of it under your feet, as not in consideration and acknowledgment of the greatness of it, to be open and free-hearted in forgiving one another such injuries and trespasses as are done to you. This is the righteous and royal way of that God with the world, "who," as Peter saith, "without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work."

I shall not need, I suppose, to caution that which hath been delivered upon this account, with any such item or explication as this: that it was far from our Saviour's intent to threaten, either his apostles, Or any other man, that they should incur the sore judgment mentioned, the loss of the forgiveness of sins, or be cast into the prison of hell, by every passionate or sudden heat conceived against a man upon a provocation, or offence given. If this were so, the whole world of saints, in a manner, might cry out, as the apostles, upon occasion of another doctrine taught by Christ, sometimes did, "Who then can be saved?" But his meaning clearly was, and is, that if they should harbour or nourish thoughts or desires of revenge against any man, that should at any time offend or injure them, and remain implacable, not admitting of a clear and cordial reconciliation with him, and should live and die in this hateful and revengeful posture, that then God would deal no better with them than the lord in the parable did by that servant to whom he had forgiven a great debt, upon his unmerciful dealing by his fellow-servant, when "be delivered him to the tormentors, to be cast into prison, until he should pay the whole debt."

Nor doth any thing that hath been asserted concerning the return of the debt of sin upon any man, after forgiveness, upon occasion of cruel,

unmerciful, and revengeful dealings by their brethren, bear at all upon that of the apostle: “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” Rom. 11:29. For the meaning hereof is not, that what God once gives he never takes away: we know there are instances in the Scripture without number to the contrary. He took away that integrity and rectitude of nature from Adam, upon his fall, which he had given him in his creation. So in the parable, he commands the “talent to be taken away from the unprofitable servant,” Matt. 25:28, which before he had given him: yea, and threatens universally, “That from every one that hath not,” viz. by way of improvement or increase, “shall be taken away even that which he hath,” ver. 29, viz. by way of stock, or original donation. So that the gifts and calling of God are not in this sense without repentance. Therefore,

2. When the apostle affirms the gifts and calling of God to be without repentance, his meaning may be, 1. That he never gives any thing to any person or people whatsoever, but that he knows and considers beforehand, all the inconveniences and disaccommodations that will follow upon it, either in reference to his own glory, or to his creature, one or other, in any kind. Insomuch that whatever be the event or consequence of any of his gifts, if they were to give again, he would give them. Nor doth that expression concerning him, “And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon earth, and it grieved him at his heart,” Gen. 6:6, any way imply, but that if man had been now to make, he would have made him; or that when he did make him, he did not foresee the inconvenience which now followed upon his making of Mm. The phrase only imports a purpose of heart in God shortly to destroy him from off the face of the earth, for his wickedness, as he saith, immediately after, that he would do. For which kind of expression, when attributed unto God, we have accounted at large in the third chapter of this discourse.

2. The gifts and calling of God are, or may be said to be, without repentance, because, let men continue the same persons, I mean geometrically, or proportionably the same, which they were when the donation, or collation of any gift, was first made by God unto them, he never changeth or altereth his dispensation towards them, unless it be for the better, or in order to their further good; in which case he cannot be said to repent of what he had given. But in case men shall change and alter from what they were, when God first dealt graciously and

bountifully by them, especially if they shall notoriously degenerate, or cast away that principle, or through negligence or otherwise, divest and despoil themselves of that very qualification on which God, as it were, grafted his benefit or gift vouchsafed to them; in this case, though he recalls and takes away his gift, he cannot he said to repent of the giving it, because the terms upon which he gave it please him still; only the persons to whom he gave it, and who pleased him when he gave it unto them, have now rendered themselves, by their unworthiness, displeasing unto him, and incapable, by the laws and rules of his righteous dispensations, of any further enjoyment thereof, This is the case between God and such men, who having once obtained remission of sins from him by such a faith, which wrought, or was apt and ready to work by love, afterwards upon the loss or degeneration of this faith, together with the operativeness of contrary and vile principles, are divested by him of that great and glorious privilege, and fall back into their former estate of condemnation.

Therefore, from those quarters of the parable in Matthew which we have lately surveyed, perfect intelligence comes that persons, who have by means of a sound faith received remission of sins upon the account of Christ's death, may through negligence in not preserving this faith, or the sweetness and soundness of it, so far provoke their glorious benefactor, as to cause him to repeal that his act of grace towards them, and to suffer their former guilt to return, like the unclean spirit with seven worse than himself, upon them. From whence it undeniably follows, that Christ hath purchased remission of sins by his death for those, who notwithstanding, may through their own folly and wickedness perish. Chrysostom interprets the place in full consonancy with this inference or supposition. "Although," saith he, "the graces and gifts of God are without repentance, yet malice or wickedness prevailed so far as to dissolve this law. What then is there of more grievous consequence, than to remember injuries which appear to be a subverter, or destroyer, of such and so great a gift of God?" Amongst our later expositors, Musculus, as orthodox as men can make a man, advanceth the same interpretation, making it his third observation upon the place, "that those sins which are, through the grace of God, pardoned at present, shall not be remitted in the future, unless we will forgive our brother. For it is an unjust thing," saith he, "that he should enjoy the free remitment, or forgiveness of a debt of ten

thousand talents, who refuseth to forgive his brother a debt of an hundred."

Mr. John Ball himself nibbleth also at this exposition, even whilst, for the sake of those that sit at the table with him, he opposeth it. "As in the parable," saith he, "the Lord is said to remit to his servant a thousand talents, when he desired him, viz. inchoately, or upon condition, which was not confirmed, because he did not forgive his fellow servant; so the false prophets are bought by the blood of Christ, viz. in a sort as they believed in Christ, but not sincerely and unfeignedly." A little after, "to these men their sins were remitted in a sort in this world," &c. If he would have brought forth his darkness of inchoately, upon condition, in a sort, into a clear and perfect light, his meaning must have been, that that remission of sins which God gives unto men in this world, he "neither confirms unto them in the hour of death, nor in the day of judgment," the author's own words a little after the former, in case they live and die under an implacableness or unmercifulness of spirit towards those who injure them. Such a sense as this is truly orthodox, whether men vote it such or no. Our English annotators, though they neither buy nor sell this interpretation in expressness of terms, yet interpretatively they buy or confirm it. "This parable," say they upon verse 35, "informs us that they shall find God severe and implacable that do not forgive their brethren, although they have been diversely and grievously injured by them." In these words they clearly suspend the gracious act of God in remission of sins, in respect of the ultimate and complete exercise of it, upon the Christian deportment and behaviour of men in forgiving one another their trespasses.

How perfectly it stands with the immutability of God, the unchangeableness of his love, the unalterableness of his counsels, and generally with all his attributes, to reverse acts or grants of favour, to demand debts once forgiven, &c. shall be cleared in the process of the digression following, occasioned by the contents of this chapter.

## CHAPTER 9.

**Containing a digression about the commonly received Doctrine of Perseverance, occasioned by several passages in the preceding chapter, wherein the benefit and comfort of that doctrine, which teacheth a possibility of the saints' declining even to destruction, is avouched and clearly evicted, above the other.**

NOTWITHSTANDING the frequently experienced truth of the common saying, “*pessimus consiliarius timor*,” fear is a very bad counsellor, yet is it very incident to the natures of men never to think themselves wiser than in their fears, nor to be more importunately wedded to any apprehensions than those which they conceive to be sovereign for the prevention of evil. With what height of confidence and unrelentingness of judgment did the Jews please themselves in their opinion of justification by works, through an apprehension that they must needs disclaim or reject Moses, and the authority of his law or writings, in case they admitted the doctrine of Paul concerning justification by faith. Whereas, this apostle expressly proves and demonstrates unto them, that this doctrine of his was so far from reflecting prejudice in the least upon Moses's law, that indeed it did establish it, *i. e.* avouch the truth and authority of it, Rom. 3:31, and chap. 4 throughout. Yea, I verily believe that a very considerable part of those doctrines and tenets, which are at this day held by professors of Christian religion, are not maintained or held by them, so much upon any evidence or confidence they have of their truth upon those positive grounds, whether from Scripture or reason, which they commonly plead for them, as out of apprehensions and conceits that the contrary doctrines are of evil consequence, and will in one kind or other do them harm, in case they should give entertainment to them. Lactantius reports that one principal thing which entangled the heathen with idolatry, or worshipping of idols, was a certain fear or conceit that possessed them, that all their religion or devotions would be in vain, in case they saw not with their eyes something that they might worship. Tertullian, as Austin reports, who held the soul to be corporeal or a body, held it upon the account of this fear, lest if he made not a body of it, he should make nothing at all of it.

The ancient Jews, Mr. Brightman affirmeth it, held it not meet for young men to read the book of the Canticles, out of a fear they would receive harm by it. Mercer likewise relates, that the ancient wise men of this nation judged it best to restrain the common people from reading the book of Ecclesiastes, out of a conceit that it both contradicted itself, and other parts of Scripture likewise. Luther, it is sufficiently known, rejected the Epistle, of James, out of a conceit that it contradicted the doctrine of Paul, concerning justification by faith only. And several others, both learned and good men, some the second Epistle of Peter, some other pieces only or chiefly, upon the like account of fear.

Concerning the doctrine which maintaineth a possibility of defection in the saints themselves, or true believers, unto destruction, though I am not ignorant, but that many, both texts of Scripture and arguments otherwise, have been levied, and are wont to be brought into the field against it; yet I verily believe that that which makes professors generally so impatiently zealous in their opposition to it, is not so much any satisfaction they find either in these Scriptures or arguments for the proof of that which is contrary unto it, as their inconsiderate and tumultuary fears, lest this doctrine should bereave them of those inward accommodations of peace and comfort which they conceive themselves to be befriended with by the other. In this respect, being little less than necessitated for the securing of some passages, in the former chapter, very material for the carrying on the main design of this discourse, to engage a little about the doctrine of perseverance, I conceive it best, in my entrance hereupon, to remove this stumbling stone out of the way, and to demonstrate, not only that this doctrine hath every whit as fair and full a consistency with the peace and comfort of the saints as that contrary to it, but that of the two it is of a far better and more healthful complexion to make a nurse for them. "When we have cleared the innocency and inoffensiveness of it in respect of the peace and comfort of men, and so shall have reconciled it unto their affections, it will be no great mastery, I conceive, to gain in their judgments unto it afterwards. And,

1. I must crave leave, the truth and dear interest of the precious souls of men so commanding me, to say and to affirm, that the doctrine of perseverance so much magnified amongst us, as it is commonly taught and received, is, in the nature and proper tendency of it, very obstructive,



yea, and destructive unto the true peace and sound comfort of souls. For if we shall diligently inquire after the common and ordinary causes of those doubts and fears so incident to professors of religion, as also of those extreme burnings and ragings of conscience, wherewith both such persons and others are sometimes most grievously handled and tormented, we shall find them, if not universally, yet generally, and with very few cases of exception, to be these, with their fellows, negligence and slothfulness in watching over their hearts and ways, omission of known duties, formality in services, unprofitableness in their course and callings, non-proficiency in grace; and especially the frequent prevailings and breakings out of base corruptions, vile affections, noisome lusts, &c. Therefore what doctrine soever is, in the native frame and constitution of it, apt to lead men into such snares of death, to fill their consciences with the guilt of such unchristian misdemeanours as these, must needs carry a strong antipathy in it, and be full of enmity against the inward peace and comforts of their dear souls. And what doctrine lightly can there be of a more apparent and notorious tendency this way than that which promiseth unto men, and that with height of assurance, under what looseness or vile practices soever, exemption and freedom from that punishment, the fear and dread whereof is the strongest and sharpest bridle which God himself hath to put into the lips of the unruly flesh in men to restrain it from sin; yea, and which, the strength and sharpness of it notwithstanding, the flesh many times despiseth and laughs to scorn, and disdains to be reclaimed or held in by it? And is not that doctrine of perseverance, commonly taught and believed amongst us, of this very calculation, tendency, and import?

If it be said, Yea, but they who teach the doctrine of perseverance teach withal, yea, urge and press the necessity of the use of such means, which God hath appointed to enable men to persevere; I answer, It is in vain to persuade or press men unto the use of such means in any kind, which are in themselves distasteful and displeasing unto them, when they are ascertained and secured beforehand that they shall not fail of the end howsoever, whether they use such means or no.

If it be replied, that the teachers I speak of do not promise perseverance in faith unto the end, but only unto those who shall use the means appointed by God for the obtaining of it; I answer, if this indeed be the tenor of their doctrine, mine and theirs are no more two, but one and

the same. I am as willing and free as the most zealous of them in their way, to give that great pledge of heaven, the Word of the living God, unto the saints, to secure them of their standing unto the end, upon the use of the means which God hath prescribed in order thereunto. But I fear this is not the clear and simple tenor of their doctrine we now speak of: they blend it with some such additional ingredient as this, that as God requires the use of the means of perseverance at the hand of the saints, and will give it unto none but those who shall use them ; yet he hath certainly, universally, and irreversibly decreed, that they shall all use them accordingly, and that he himself will interpose by the power of his Spirit, that not a man of them shall miscarry at this point. I have but a word to say to this : let them produce such a decree as this, and it shall be an end of all strife between me and them, as to this point, immediately. But how little there is to evince any such decree in all that they are wont to allege and argue to that purpose, will sufficiently appear upon the examination, whereunto we shall bring it in due time.

2. As that doctrine of perseverance whereof professors make such a treasure, is deeply accessory to the greatest part of those fears, those wringings and gripings of conscience, wherewith their peace is interrupted, and their comforts appalled and shaken, so is it exceedingly to be feared that it hath a potent and pernicious influence of causality into those frequent, daily, and most sad apostasies and declinings from ways of holiness unto looseness and profaneness, which are found amongst them. For when the flesh, or that which is corrupt, carnal, and sensual in a man, (a principle not only in being, but even vigorous more than enough in the greatest and best believers,) shall be intoxicated with such a luscious and fulsome conceit as this, that it hath goods laid up for the days of eternity, hath it not the temptation of that foolish man, as he is called, upon it, who upon a conceit that he had goods laid up for many years, encouraged his soul unto vanity; “Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,” Luke 12:19. When a man that stands is in any capacity of falling, is it not the only way to educe that power or capacity into act, and to cause him to fall indeed, to persuade him that he is in no possibility of falling ? Agag, being full of this conceit, “Surely the bitterness of death is past,” 1 Sam. 10: 32, came, as the text saith, unto Samuel delicately. When the flesh shall be taught to say, Surely the bitterness of eternal death is past, I am out of all danger, all possibility of suffering the

vengeance of eternal fire, is it not a secret and bewitching encouragement unto it to wax wanton against Christ, and to feed foul upon the sinful delicacies of this present world ? Not only the distinct sound, hut any confused blast of such a trumpet as this, is sufficient to prepare the flesh to the battle of sense and sensuality. Nor do they seem to be much acquainted with, at least not much to consider, the genius of that principle in men we now speak of, I mean the flesh, who think there is any other means so proper, or probable to hamper it, to break the heart and strength of it, as the iron yoke of the fear and dread of the worm that never dieth.

If it be said, Yea, but it cannot be proved that any of those who decline from religious courses unto looseness, how many soever they be that thus miscarry, ever were true believers; or if such, that they continued in their declinings, without a holy recollection of themselves before the end; to this I answer,

1. Be it supposed (which yet will never be proved) that all they who fall away from a profession of faith and holiness, without rising again or returning, were never true believers, yet it cannot be denied (and it is commonly granted by men of contrary judgment) but that many of them were, or might be, in a very fair, probable, and hopeful way of obtaining true faith, of being made sound believers. Now, that doctrine whose native and proper tendency is to take men off from the means, or to turn them aside out of the ways of life and peace, or, which is the same, of sound believing, is every whit as much, if not more, anti-evangelical, as that which directly occasioneth such miscarriages in those who do truly believe ; so that there is nothing gotten by that pretence howsoever. But,
2. If there be any persons under heaven who may, upon sufficient grounds, and justifiable by the word of God, be judged true believers, many of those apostates we speak of were to be judged such. All the visible lineaments of a true faith were in their faces. As far as the eye of man is able to pierce, they lived “godlily, righteously, and soberly in this present world.” Doth any true believer act zealously for his God ? So did they. Is any true believer fruitful in good works ? So were they: yea, there were found in those we now speak of, not only such things upon the sight and knowledge whereof in men we ought to judge them true believers, but even such things further which we ought to reverence and honour, as the lovely and majestic characters of faith and holiness in their exaltation;

therefore it is but an importune pretence to deny them to have been true believers. To say, that whilst they stood, men were, indeed, bound, in charity to judge them true believers, but by their declining they discovered themselves not to have been the men, is but to beg the question, and that upon very ill terms to obtain it. 3. If our Saviour's rule be authentic, "By their fruits ye shall know them," Matt. 7:20; we did not only stand bound by the law of charity, but by the law of a righteous or district judgment itself, to judge the persons we speak of, true believers, whilst they adorned the gospel with such fruits of righteousness as were mentioned; for our Saviour doth not say, By their fruits you shall have ground to conceive or to conjecture them such or such, or to judge them in charity such or such, but "you shall know them." Now, what a man knows he is not bound to conjecture, or to judge it in a way of charity to be that which he knoweth it to be, but positively to judge and conclude of it accordingly. If, then, it be possible, as hath been said, for men, by any signs, fruits, works, expressions in one kind or other, to know true believers, which our Saviour, in the said rule and elsewhere, seemeth to suppose to be very possible, the persons we speak of may be known to have been such.

4. And lastly ; if that doctrine of perseverance, in the comfort whereof men so much rejoice, entangles them with such a necessity for the defence of it as this, I mean, to judge all those to have been hypocrites, or unsound in the faith, who afterwards apostatise and decline to profaneness, it will be found, upon a true account, to be a doctrine of no such good accord with their peace or comfort as is pretended, or as they inconsiderately imagine ; for what will it avail me to my peace or comfort, though I be never so fully resolved or persuaded, that in case I be a true believer I shall never fall away to perdition, if, in the meantime, I be so entangled in my judgment that I can hardly, if at all, have any sufficient or clear ground to judge when or that I am a true believer, or be otherwise occasioned strongly to suspect and doubt of the truth of my faith ? Now, if I must of necessity conclude all those to have been hypocrites, or pretenders only unto true faith, who afterwards fall, and rise no more, I must needs hereby minister an occasion of a thousand fears and jealousies to myself and my own conscience touching the truth and soundness of mine own faith, lest this should be of no better kind or constitution than theirs. And being compassed about with such fears and

jealousies as these, what great peace or comfort am I capable of, touching my salvation ? or what is it to me whether true believers may fall away or no, when as I lie under the heavy pressure of so many doubts and debates with myself whether I be a true believer or no?

If it be replied, Yea, but I may have security and assurance enough for the truth and soundness of mine own faith, because I am perfectly conscious to the uprightness and simplicity of mine own heart, which I could not be of theirs; and therefore, though I might very possibly be mistaken touching the truth of their faith, having nothing to found my judgment in this kind upon, but only their outward deportments ; yet, having the testimony of mine own heart and conscience, together with my outward conversation, I may here be confident, though I miscarried there. To this also I answer,

1. Far he it from me to deny but that a man may very possibly attain unto a very strong and potent assurance, and that upon grounds every way sufficient, warrantable, and good, that his faith is sound and saving, yea, and such, wherein persevering unto the end, he shall undoubtedly be actually saved. I shall not need to argue this, because it is nothing but what is owned on both sides. But,

2. I verily believe, withal, that there is not one true believer of a hundred, I might say of many thousands, who hath any such assurance as this of the truth and soundness of his faith; such an assurance, I mean, which is built upon solid and pregnant foundations, and which are proper to bear it. My reasons are two. 1. Because, though the testimony of a man's heart and conscience touching his uprightness towards God, or the soundness of any thing that is saving in him, be comfortable and cheering, yet seldom are these properties, this comfortableness and cheeringness of it, built upon such foundations which are sufficient to warrant them, at least upon such whose sufficiency in this kind men duly apprehend: for the testimony of the conscience of a man touching any thing which is spiritually and excellently good, is of no such value, unless first it be excellently enlightened with the knowledge of the nature, properties, and condition of that of which it testifieth; and, 2. Be in the actual contemplation, consideration, or remembrance of what it knoweth in this kind when it rendereth such testimony. Now, there are, I question not, many thousands, both of men and women in the world, who truly believe, and whose hearts are upright with God, who yet are not to any such

degree enlightened about the natures and properties either of a true faith or uprightness of heart, but that the testimony which their consciences give concerning these is liable to many disputes and questions about the certainty and truth of it in the consciences themselves which give it. This is the constant and known experience of, in a manner, the whole believing world; there being not one amongst many of the inhabitants hereof, the testimony of whose conscience touching the soundness of his faith is upon any such terms, or to any such degree, either comforting or cheering, but that he conflicts with many fears, and scruples, and doubtful apprehensions notwithstanding.

2. The comfortableness and cheeringness of the testimony which any man's conscience gives touching the soundness of his faith and the uprightness of his heart towards God, depending mainly and principally upon the uniform, regulate, and constant tenor of his life and conversation in ways of holiness; and there being so few, even among the saints themselves, who are to any competent degree careful to walk without stumblings, and slippings, and many strains of unworthiness, hence it must needs follow that that testimony of conscience we speak of will falter and be divided in itself; and though that which is comforting and cheering in it may be predominant, yet the consciousness and sense of irregularities in men's ways must needs detract proportionably from the same. The credit and authority of that testimony which any man's conscience gives in unto him touching the truth and soundness of his faith, must needs in a very great measure depend upon the equable flowings or issuings forth hereof in ways and works of righteousness; because when there is any considerable interruption in these, that testimony will be suspended and put to silence for the time, unless the conscience itself be under the power of some delusion. This is evident from the Scriptures themselves in many places. "Little children," saith John, "let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous," 1 John 3:7. This caveat, let no man deceive you," plainly intimates that the consciences, even of Christians and true believers themselves, (for such John's "little children" here are on all hands presumed to be,) may very possibly be deceived in their estimate of a righteous man, or, which is the same, of a sound believer, and judge him to be either the one or the other, who is neither. This is chiefly spoken, and is accordingly to be understood, concerning a man's judging of himself. Whereas he adds, "he

that doth righteousness is righteous,” it is to be understood emphatically and exclusively; so that “he,” and he only, “who doth righteousness,” is to be judged a righteous man, the Scripture frequently expressing itself after the same manner. See Isa. 66:2; Gal. 3:12; John 3:16. Now, by “doing righteousness,” he doth not mean the doing of some righteous acts now and then, but a constant and uniform practice of righteousness, human frailties only excepted, which come not into this account; for in the writings of this apostle, as GREEK, 1 John 3:8, 9, usually, if not constantly, signifies, as it were, to follow a trade or course of sinning, to sin with the like frequency and dexterity that a tradesman works upon his ordinary calling or occupation: so doth GREEK, 1 John 2:29; 3:10; and so GREEK, 1 John 1:6; John 3:21; and GREEK, John 7:17; 9:31, &c. signify a proportionable acting of righteousness, and of the truth, and of the will of God. Now, if no man can or ought, upon Scripture grounds, to be judged a righteous man or sound believer but only he who doth or worketh righteousness upon such terms as these, evident it is, that in what degree men fall short of these terms in working righteousness, the testimony of their consciences touching the soundness of their faith and uprightness of their hearts towards God must needs falter, and be encumbered with doubts and fears proportionably, unless their consciences themselves be misinformed or hardened. Therefore, what doctrine soever occasioneth men to question the sufficiency of their obedience or righteous walkings, for rendering the testimony of their consciences touching the soundness of their faith valid and worthy belief, can be of no such lovely or desirable consequence for their comfort and peace; and consequently the doctrine of perseverance cannot, in a righteous judgment, be adjudged such: because, as hath been already argued, it still necessitateth men to give sentence against a better and more uniform righteousness than their own, (I mean, the practical righteousness of many who afterwards apostatised without returning,) as being invalid and insufficient to evince those to have been true believers in whom it was found. And if I stand bound in conscience to judge those to have been hypocrites, or pretenders only to a true faith, and not true believers indeed, whose righteousness and fruitfulness of conversation by many degrees exceeded mine, am I not strongly hereby occasioned, yea, engaged, to question the truth and soundness of mine own faith ? especially considering, as hath been said, that the evidence of the truth and reality of every man’s faith depends so

much upon the fruitfulness and operativeness of it in ways and works of righteousness.

The premises duly considered, that doctrine of perseverance, over which the generality of professors so impotently rejoice as being of so desirable and rich a compliance with their spiritual comfort and peace, must needs appear to be a doctrine of no such import or accommodation to them, but rather a doctrine very apt and likely to entice them into a boldness and venturousness in sinning, and consequently must needs dispose them to apostasy and declining, yea, and fill their consciences many times with dread and horror, and very frequently with great jealousies, inextricable questions and disputes about the truth and soundness of their faith.

Yea, but, will the friends of the said doctrine, it is like, still say, We find it very sweet and comfortable to us; whereas the contrary doctrine, which tells us of a possibility of our final apostasy and falling away, is very sad, and full of discouragement, &c. To these things, and all that can be pretended in this kind, we answer,

1. Suppose the doctrine we speak of were never so comfortable, yet this would be no argument of the truth or goodness of it, unless the comfortableness of it be found in due consistence with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It were easy to invent twenty doctrines every whit as comfortable (nay much more comfortable) as this, in respect of the natures and imports of them, which yet will be found notoriously defective in point of truth, because they hold not any regular proportion with those attributes of God. As for example, such doctrines as these, "All men without exception shall be saved, whether they believe or not; no man shall be punished for any sin whatsoever, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come; men are as much approved of by God in the committing of the greatest sin, as in the performance of the greatest duty." Such doctrines, I say, as these, are much more sweet and comfortable in respect of their frame, constitution, and import, than that which affirms a necessity of the saints' perseverance. But as those doctrines with their fellows, are not to be commended, nor entertained for their sweetness' or comfortableness' sake, having no approbation or countenance from God in his word; so neither is the common doctrine of perseverance at all to be regarded for any thing of like accommodation, I mean for any thing sweet or comfortable in it, unless the stamp of Divine



authority could be shown upon it, which by no light yet extant is to be seen.

2. Though doctrines and other means of spiritual comfort are very desirable, and earnestly to be pursued and contended for, when they are regular and lawful, yet as we must be content to be at the allowance of our heavenly Father, for the accommodations and comforts of this present life, and not be our own carvers of all that comes within our reach for such a purpose, so ought we no less to rest satisfied with such grounds and means for our spiritual consolation which God hath judged meet for us, and hath himself administered unto us in his word, and not strain our fantasies or apprehensions to mould such notions and doctrines as we ourselves conceit to be commodious and serviceable to us in such a Way. And as it is a high reproach unto the gracious and bountiful providence of God for men to have recourse unto the devil, or any of his unclean arts or methods, for their temporal supplies in any kind; so is it no less, if not rather much more dishonourable to him, when men shall make themselves beholding to a spirit of error for the supports or supplies of their inner man.

But,

3. No such notion or doctrine, which is only comfortable and betiding peace to the flesh, *i. e.* the corrupt, base, and sensual part of a man, ought be esteemed, especially by the saints, so much as comfortable, simply and indeed, or any means of peace truly so called, but should rather be looked upon as prejudicial unto, and of an evil influence upon their whole interest in this kind. For that which is proper to strengthen the hand of the flesh, can very hardly, if at all, be serviceable unto the spirit, in the things of the peace and comfort thereof. Now that the doctrine so often named, is a grand benefactress to the flesh, a full fountain of joy and gladness unto it, hath been sufficiently proved in this chapter already. I here only add this brief demonstration further: It must needs be a doctrine speaking to the heart of the flesh, because it administereth a certain hope unto it that it shall however escape the wrath and vengeance which is to come, yea, though it disporteth itself in all maimer of looseness and licentiousness in the meantime. For this is the spirit that speaks to that doctrine.

That it is no ways comforting or strengthening to the spirit, or spiritual and regenerate part of a man, but rather fulsome and importune, is

evident from hence, because a man, so far as he is regenerate and spiritual, desires not, wisheth not heaven, or salvation itself, but only in ways of holiness and of honour; nor would he purchase a dispensation, though it were offered unto him, with the least hair on his head, to take his fill in the pleasures of sin without danger. Nay, if an angel from heaven should come and offer such a dispensation as this unto him upon the terms specified, it would be as an unclean and accursed offer unto him. The holy angels, because they have no flesh, no corruption in them, though they be mutable, (as all creatures whatsoever by the unavoidable law of their creation are,) value not their happiness, or their security in their standings, at the least mite the less, because they have no liberty of sinning without danger; nor would they account such a liberty any privilege or comfort at all to them if they had it. But that they are capable or in a possibility of sinning, as well as men regenerate, though not in so near a capacity, we shall, I conceive, have opportunity to demonstrate in the sequel of the discourse. Now a man regenerate, take him so far as he is spiritual and born of God, valueth opportunities of sinning no more than an angel: nor desireth continuance in the love and favour of God, upon any other terms or conditions than such on which the Lord Christ himself, as it seems, enjoyed it. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love," John 15:10. So then evident it is that the new man taketh no pleasure, rejoiceth not in any such doctrine, which ensures either perseverance in faith, or continuance in the favour and love of God to it, upon, any other terms, than of walking holily and humbly with him. And upon these terms, the doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints' declining, ensureth both the said glorious accommodations with as high a hand of security, as it.

Yea, the truth is, that the received doctrine of perseverance is so far from gratifying the spiritual part of a man, that it is to it what Peter was to Christ, when he counselled him to pity himself, Matt. 16:22, I mean an offence; or what those Christians were unto Paul, of whom he complained that they brake his heart with weeping, Acts 21:13. For it secretly whispers and suggests unto it such things, the nature and proper tendency whereof is to scatter what the spirit had gathered, to dissolve and break the strength of those holy purposes and resolutions wherewith the regenerate part hath harnessed and armed itself against temptations

unto evil. When the new man in a servant of God shall (with Paul) have reasoned and resolved thus: “ I will keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9:27, he that shall come and insinuate thus into him, Whether thou keepest under thy body or no, whether thou bringest it into subjection, or whether thou sufferest it to wax wanton, thou shalt be in no danger, in no possibility of being a castaway, shall he not loosen the very foundation and ground-work of such a resolution, which was the sense and apprehension of the great danger of being a castaway in case his body was not kept under ? Or suppose a man should argue, and conclude thus within himself, I will labour with my hands, that I may have whereof both to subsist honestly and to do good unto others, would not such a suggestion as this to him, that he shall have that which will be abundantly sufficient for both purposes, whether he laboureth with his hands or no, be a temptation and snare upon him to retract his conclusion in that kind? If it be here said, Yea, but a certain knowledge and full assurance that God will never cease to love me, will bestow salvation and blessedness upon me, whatsoever my failings shall be, is an effectual motive unto my heart and soul, to cleave unto him in all love and faithfulness; and consequently is nourishing, cheering, and strengthening even to the inner man: to this I answer,

1. That the inner, or new man in the saints, takes no pleasure at all in any such notion or persuasion as this, that it may or shall enjoy the love of God, or salvation itself, under the practice of all manner of sin and wickedness whatsoever. The very sound of these last words is harsh and uncouth unto it. Nor can it easily be persuaded, that any such persuasion is from God.

2. Should it be granted, that a full and perfect assurance of the continuance and love of God upon all, upon any terms whatsoever, even of the greatest sin and wickedness, would be an effectual motive upon the heart and conscience of a regenerate man, to cleave in love unto God, yet would it not be a motive in this kind of any such strength or efficacy as such an assurance as this, that he shall continue in the love and favour of God for ever, in a way of righteousness and well doing, but withal shall be in danger of losing this love, in case he shall decline unto wickedness. The reason why this latter compounded motive must needs be of more

efficacy to the purpose mentioned than the former, is because the latter supposeth a necessity of this cleaving in love to God for the obtaining of this great good, “the continuance for ever of the love of God towards him,” which the former doth not. Now this is a general rule, that that motive is still of greater force to persuade to an action, which renders the action persuaded unto as of absolute necessity for the obtaining of some desirable end, especially when the said end is ensured withal upon the performance of the action, than that which renders this end attainable without the performance of this action. He that shall persuade me to love such or such a man by telling me, that whether I love him or no, yet he will deal lovingly and friendly by me, should not persuade me to love him by an argument or motive of so much strength, as he that should move me to the same point thus: If you love him, he will deal very lovely and friendly with you; but if you shall neglect, or voluntarily injure him, you will find him a sore enemy. There is no action, how lovely or desirable soever in itself, but becomes so much the more desirable, by how much the greater good shall appear to depend upon it, and must needs be produced by it; especially if it shall yet further appear, that this good cannot be produced or obtained by any other means whatsoever without it. Now then, as he who deprives a man of a greater benefit to interest him in a lesser, doth him as real an injury or wrong as he that should take away a part of his substance from him without any consideration at all: in like manner that doctrine which shall bereave the spiritual part of a man, or a believer, of a greater and more effectual motive to the performance of a duty, only to present him with a weaker, and of less power, must in reason be judged an enemy unto the one and the other, yea as great an enemy, as such a doctrine would be, which should deny them a lesser motive in that kind, without any recompense at all.

3. If such a knowledge or assurance as the objection speaks of, were an effectual motive to persuade the heart of a man to cleave in love unto God, what reason can be given why God should not administer it, in order to such a purpose, as well to his enemies and carnal men, as unto his saints or friends ? For, first, certain it is, that all men whatsoever are commanded by God to love him, or to cleave in this affection unto him. 2. As certain it is that God is not defective in the subministration of motives unto them on this behalf, no, not of those that are most proper and efficacious to persuade them thereunto. 3. As certain it is, as either of the

former, that an assurance of the love of God towards them against all sin and wickedness whatsoever that they are capable of committing, is a motive every whit as taking with, as suitable and pleasing to natural and carnal men, (if yet a motive it be,) as to spiritual and holy men, to persuade them to the love of God. Therefore, if God hath not thought meet to afford such a motive as this is unto natural or carnal men, it is no ways likely that he hath afforded it unto saints; with whose hearts, as such, (I mean as they are saints,) it hath no agreement or takingness at all (as was shown formerly).

4. And lastly; the very truth is, all things duly considered, that the consideration we now speak of, and which is specified in the objection, hath nothing at all in it of the true nature or property of a motive to persuade any man to cleave in love unto God. For whatsoever representeth God to the heart, soul, or conscience of a man, as a God in whose "sight he is good, that doth evil," Mal. 2:17, and consequently as no God of judgment; as a God promising his love, favour, and acceptance, as well unto dogs returning unto their vomits, and to swine wallowing, after their washing, in the mire, as well as unto lambs and sheep, is no consideration which commendeth him unto his creature man, or consequently which hath any thing in it to engage him to cleave in love to him. Suppose a man were thus principled, that having once had a good opinion of any man, he would never alter his opinion of him, how desperately soever the man should degenerate from himself, as though he should become the first horn amongst all the sons of Belial, turn the most bloody murderer, the most cruel oppressor, the most brutish incestuary under heaven; but under the guilt and daily practice of these and such like abominations, should love this man with as much truth, reality, and sincereness of affection, only upon the account of his sometime goodness, as he doth the most virtuous and worthy person under heaven. Would such a temper or principle as this, commend him as a person so much the more worthy love and respects, in the eyes of any considering man ? or would they not rather draw disparagement and contempt upon him; yea, and this from those very persons whom he shall affect and love upon such terms ? Therefore, in case it were possible for me certainly to know, that how loosely, how profanely, how debauchedly soever I should behave myself, yet God will love me as entirely, as fervently, as he doth the holiest and most righteous man

under heaven, it would be a very slender motive unto me to cleave in love unto him. So then it doth not yet appear by any thing that hath been mentioned or argued to the point, that the doctrine of perseverance, as it passeth up and down amongst us, is any contributor to the peace or comfort of that which is of God, but only to that which is of Satan in men, and which deserveth mortification and crucifying, instead of comfort and peace.

If it be yet further objected: But is not the doctrine of falling away a very uncomfortable doctrine, apt to beget a servile spirit in the saints, a spirit of bondage and fear ; or must not they who apprehend themselves to be in continual danger of falling away and perishing, needs eat their bread in darkness, dwell with sorrows and perplexities of soul all their days ? To these, and all other reasonings and demands of like import with them, I answer,

1. To be in danger of falling away, and to be under a possibility of falling away, are two very different things; at least, if we take the word danger in the common, which yet is the proper, notion and signification of it, viz. as it imports a probability or likelihood of evil to befall those that are said to be in danger. A man that is in danger, properly so called, of suffering evil, if the evil be great, cannot well enjoy himself with much comfort or peace whilst the danger continues. But he that is only in a possibility of suffering evil, especially being sufficiently provided of means whereby to prevent the coming of the evil upon him if he please, is fully capable of enjoying himself upon the richest and best terms of security that are compatible to a creature. Nor are men wont to be troubled with the lightest grudgings of fear in respect of such an evil, though very grievous in the kind and nature of it, which may very possibly befall them in case they may with ordinary care keep themselves from it. Men may very possibly fall into the fire and be burnt; into the water and be drowned; from the tops of houses or steeples, and be dashed in pieces; yet no man lives ever a whit the more uncomfortably, or under any kind of fear, because they live under a possibility of suffering these great evils. The reason of their security in this kind is, because they know that God hath given them reason and understanding sufficient to preserve themselves from them. In like manner, God having vouchsafed unto the saints means abundantly sufficient to preserve themselves from apostasy, and consequently from perishing, so that they need not either

apostatise or perish except themselves please; there is no occasion at all, much less any necessity, why they should live any whit the more uncomfortably, or abate so much as the least hair of their head in confidence of being saved, only because they are under a possibility of declining, and so of perishing. The apostle Paul acknowledgeth himself to have been under a possibility of being made a reprobate, or castaway, “Lest,” said he, “having preached unto others, I myself should prove or become a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9:27. Yet at what an excellent rate and height of comfort, yea of joy unspeakable and glorious did he live? “I am persuaded,” saith he, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom. 8:38, 39. That which ministered unto him the ground-work of this most raised and blessed confidence, notwithstanding the possibility he was under of being made a castaway, was partly that clear and certain knowledge which he had of the unchangeable purpose of God to give salvation unto all those who should persevere in faith and holiness unto the end; partly also the like knowledge of the bounty of God towards all his saints, in vouchsafing unto them so rich and full a proportion of means as he doth, whereby to persevere accordingly. Thus then we see, that the doctrine of falling away, teaching only a possibility hereof, and so of perishing, is no doctrine of uncomfortableness, nor necessarily occasioneth the least fear in men of falling away, or of perishing.

2. Suppose, for argument’s sake, the doctrine of perseverance should be subscribed unto, and that absolute assurance of salvation granted unto believers, which this doctrine pretends to give unto them; yet will not that conditional assurance which the other doctrine affords unto them, fall much short of it; yea, in most respects, some whereof have been already touched, it will be found, in order to their comfort and peace, greater than it. Put case I were a man, who very much desired to live long in the world, and God should please to grant me a lease or assurance of my life for a thousand years, only upon condition that I should not wilfully destroy myself, as either by thrusting a sword through my own bowels, or by casting myself headlong from some high tower, or by taking poison, known to me for such beforehand, with the like; would I not upon the matter be as well satisfied with such a conditional leave or grant as this,

as with one that should be absolute, and wherein my life should be assured unto me against all possible attempts to be made by myself to destroy it? Doubtless, if it were simply long life which I desired, the former grant would be as satisfactory unto me as the latter. Indeed, if besides the security of my life, and of the continuance of it for such a term, I should wantonly or vain-gloriously desire to show desperate tricks, without fear or danger, as to take lions by the beards, or bears by the paws, to tread upon cockatrices, to wash in cauldrons of boiling lead, or the like, then the latter grant would accommodate me better than the former. In like manner, if it be simply and singly the salvation of my soul which I desire, and the certainty or assurance hereof, such a conditional promise made unto me by God as this, that saved I shall certainly be, if I will but quit myself like a man, abstain from foolish lusts, and not with the dog return again to my vomit, or with the swine that hath been washed to my wallowing in the mire, such a promise, I say, as this, is security in abundance unto me in that behalf. But if my desire be over and above the saving of my soul to live loosely and profanely, to disport myself in all manner of sin and wickedness, to affront the heavens, and bid defiance to the Almighty, and laugh Jesus Christ and his gospel in the face to scorn, or the like, without running the hazard of losing my soul, then I confess only such a grant or promise of salvation from God, as the doctrine of absolute perseverance demands, would satisfy and content me, and furnish me with that assurance which I desire. So that the most express and evident truth is, that there is nothing more in that assurance of salvation which the doctrine of absolute perseverance pretends unto, than in that which the doctrine of falling away, or of conditional perseverance indulgeth unto the saints, but only a liberty or fearlessness of sinning. And whether men may not be of a free, ingenuous, and son-like spirit, without a liberty or boldness of sinning; yea, whether such a liberty as this will consist with that spirit, I freely refer to the determination of *any* man, who hath been never so little baptized into the spirit, whereby the saints cry, Abba, Father.

3. That doctrine which is efficacious and proper to cut off, and prevent all those occasions and miscarriages, from which troubles of conscience, doubtings of salvation, fears of perishing, &c. do most frequently, if not always arise, must needs be a doctrine of a far better comportance with the peace and comfort of men, than that which is apt to multiply or to



give being to such occasions. Now,

3.1. That the unclean issues of lust and corruption in the lives and ways of men, are the springs and fountains that commonly send forth the bitter waters of inward troubles, fears, and perplexities of soul, hath been already argued in this chapter; and besides, is nothing but what the daily experience of too many sealeth unto for truth. 3.2. It hath been likewise brought forth into a clear light, that the doctrine of absolute perseverance is of as pregnant and dangerous a calculation as a doctrine lightly can be, to cause the lives and ways of men to abound with those unclean issues we speak of. Therefore, 3.3., and lastly, I here add, That the contrary doctrine, I mean of conditional perseverance, is of a kindly temper, of a most absolute choice, and proper constitution, to prevent the breaking out of such issues, to abate the courage, and to break the heart of those corruptions in men, which otherwise would be very unruly, and hardly bear restraint, and consequently is a faithful and severe guardian to and over the peace and comforts of men. For teaching on the one hand, certainty of perseverance, and of salvation thereupon, upon a conscientious use of those means which. God hath prescribed in order thereunto, I mean for the enabling of men to persevere, it mightily cheereth, fortifieth, and strengtheneth the spirit in men who desireth, as hath been proved, neither perseverance, nor salvation itself, upon any other terms than these, and rejoiceth above measure, that upon these they may, and shall most assuredly be bad; and on the other band, by teaching that by looseness, profaneness, negligence, in the use of means, &c. there may be an apostatising to perdition, it sorely rebukes the flesh, or corruption in a man, and puts a sharp bit and bridle into their lips. “A bridle,” saith Solomon, “for the ass, and a rod for the fool’s back,” Prov. 26:3. The terrible rod of hell fire, is for the back of that great fool, the flesh, or that which is irrational and unruly in men, without the shaking and sound whereof it will hardly learn subjection.

If it be objected; Yea, but experience shows that the contrary doctrine, that which maintains unconditional perseverance, is more effectual to subdue corruption in men than the other, inasmuch as many who maintain the doctrine of falling away are known to be loose, and of sinful addiction in several kinds, to be no friends to the power of religion, &c., whereas men of greatest holiness and strictest conversation are known to be of the contrary judgment; to this also I answer,

1. The experience asserted in the objection is not so unquestionable in point of truth, but that if the assertors were put home upon the proof, they would, I fear, account more in presumption than in reasonableness of argument. For if persons of the one judgment and of the other were duly compared together, I verily believe there would be found every whit as full a proportion of men truly conscientious and religious amongst those whose judgments stand, and have stood, for a possibility of falling away in the saints, as on the other side. But through a foolish and unsavoury kind of partiality, we are apt on all hands, according to the proverb, to count all our own geese for swans, and other men's swans geese. Certain I am, that if the writings of men of the one judgment and of the other be compared together, and an estimate made from hence of the religious worth and holiness of the authors respectively, those who oppose the common doctrine of perseverance need count it no robbery to make themselves every ways equal in this honour with their opposers. The truth is, if it be lawful for me to utter what I really apprehend and judge in the case, I do not find the spirit of holiness to breathe with that authority, heat, or excellency of power in the writings of the latter, which I am very sensible of in the writings of the former. These call for righteousness, holiness, and all manner of Christian conversation with every whit as high a hand as the other, and add nothing to check, obstruct, or enfeeble the authority of their demands in this kind; whereas the other; though they be sore many times in their exhortations and conjurements unto holiness, yet otherwhile render both these, and themselves in them, contemptible, by avouching such principles, which cut the very sinews and strength of such their exhortations, and fully balance all the weight of those motives by which they seek to bind them upon the consciences of men. And for numbers of men truly holy and conscientious, doubtless the primitive Christians, for three hundred years together and upwards, next after the times of the apostles, will fully balance, with an abundant surplussage, both for numbers and truth of godliness, all those in the reformed churches, who since Calvin's days have adhered to the common doctrine of perseverance. And that the churches of Christ more generally, during the said space of three hundred years and more, next after the apostles, held a possibility of a total and final defection, even in true and sound believers, is so clear from the records yet extant of those times, that men who shall please to acquaint

themselves with them, cannot, without much opposition from their consciences, deny it. We shall, God willing, give some light of proof to this assertion in the 15th chapter of this discourse.

2. Concerning the persons signally, I suppose, aimed at for the confirmation of the said experiment on the right hand, as Calvin, Musculus, P. Martyr, Bucer, with other protestant divines of like note and name with them; together with such of our English ministers and other professors amongst us, who stood up with the greatest zeal in opposing ceremony and superstition, episcopal tyranny, and popish innovations, being generally reputed men very exemplary, and particular in their ways and conversations, my answer is, 1. That it is a mere mistake to conclude or think that these, especially the former, were so thorough or settled in their judgments for the doctrine of absolute perseverance, as to have no thoughts within them, coming and going the contrary way. He that shall narrowly and impartially peruse their writings, will, I verily believe, find in them every whit as much said for conditional as for absolute perseverance. I shall, God willing, give a very competent account of this my faith before the end of this discourse; and shall fully prove by several express testimonies from some of the leading men, and greatest masters among them, that they had a very good mind, at least at times, to be of that opinion which affirmeth a possibility of defection in the saints even to the losing of the soul. And for the latter, I mean the English ministers, and those mentioned with them, there is the like consideration of these also. The works of such of them as have written, bewray them to have had both the nations we speak of in their womb; in which works or writings of theirs, if they speak one word for a necessity of perseverance in the saints, it is ten to one but they speak another for a possibility of such a defection, which is never accompanied with repentance. For those godly ministers now upon the stage, who are looked upon as rigid patrons and assertors of the received doctrine of perseverance, the truth is, that whatsoever they are in the letter of their conclusion they are in the spirit of their principles and premises, builders up of that faith which destroys the faith of that doctrine; most of their sermons, which any ways relate unto that subject, having, Janus-like, two faces, with the one of which they countenance this doctrine, and with the other that which is contrary unto it: so that the experience pretended in the objection of so many pious men embracing the doctrine of perseverance is hut a mere presumption;

the men, generally, are divided in their own judgments about the point. True it is, our English ministers and professors more generally profess themselves for the doctrine of perseverance, and cry out upon the doctrine of falling away as Arminian; but, as it fell to Esau's lot, through divine dispensation, to be first born, and so to have the precedence of Jacob in worldly honours, in respect of time, though at last his "mountain and his heritage was laid waste" for ever, Mal. 1:3, 4; so it seemed good to the providence of God, that, of the doctrinal twins we speak of, striving together in the wombs of the minds and judgments of those men now under consideration, that of perseverance should first lift up its head in the world and be applauded; making no question, withal, but that the time is a coming, yea, and is even at the door, when this doctrine must decrease, and the contrary to it increase, and be exalted in the judgments, and tongues, and writings of men. The main providential occasion, I conceive, which hath caused the doctrine of perseverance to flourish hitherto like a green bay tree in this land, as it hath done, was the permission of Mr. Perkins's judgment to be overruled on this hand by those texts of Scripture, some or all of them, together with those reasons which are commonly at this day insisted upon for the proof of this doctrine. The great worth of the man otherwise, commended his opinion unto many far above the worth thereof. And it being so incident unto men "*malle credere quam judicare*," rather to believe than judge; and again, to believe persons reputed singularly pious and learned rather than others; it may very well be conceived how, by the authority and repute of this worthy instrument of God in his generation, this land should come to be so generally leavened as it is, not so much, indeed, with the opinion itself of which we speak, as with the profession of it. Before his days this doctrine found no such general applause or entertainment amongst conscientious persons in this land; and many of the learned martyrs in Queen Mary's days leaned another way, who likewise dissented from him in several other tenets about the Arminian controversies. And when I consider what grudgings there are of the contrary opinion (I mean of that which avoucheth a possibility of falling away) in the judgments of the most conscientious ministers amongst us, though the stream of their professions runs in opposition hereunto, and withal, what principles they clearly and frequently hold forth, especially in the applicatory parts of their sermons; I am easily induced to believe that, as by the authority of

one man, or some few, the profession of such a judgment came in upon them and surprised them, so, likewise, they want nothing in order to the profession of a change of their judgments in the point, but only the authority and countenance of some one or some few men of like popular acceptance, to go before them. 2. Suppose it should be granted that the godly, persons minded in the objection as holding the doctrine of perseverance, were perfectly whole and entire, and not divided, as hath been said, in their judgments thereupon, yet would it no way follow from hence that therefore this doctrine was any way accessory to that godliness whereof they gave so good an account in their lives and conversations. These men, I presume, held many principles of Christian religion, which taught them to “live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world so that if they did live according to all these worthy and commendable strains of Christianity, yet is there no necessity of entitling the doctrine of perseverance held by them, either in whole or in part, thereunto.

3. Concerning the persons chiefly intended in the objection for the confirmation of the experience therein averred, on the left hand, who, I suppose, were the worst of our late bishops, such as Romanized and tyrannized most amongst them, together with their clergy creatures and favourites, who were generally inclined to the doctrine of falling away, and withal, took more liberty in their lives than men truly religious ought to have done; my answer is,

1. That, as was said concerning the godliness of the other, that it did not necessarily flow from the doctrine of perseverance, either as held or professed by them, so neither did that looseness or unworthiness in any kind, which was found in these, necessarily, no, nor so much as probably, arise from that opinion concerning the possibility of a total and final defection of the saints professed by them. They held other principles more than enough, sufficient to teach them all that irregularness and unrighteousness of conversation which can with truth be charged on them; so that neither the good nor the bad, neither the godly nor the ungodly deportments of persons professing such or such particular doctrines, principles, or opinions, are any demonstrative, no, nor yet so much as any dialectical or probable arguments, either of truth or error in them. The scribes and pharisees were full of all hypocrisy and unrighteousness, yet did they hold and teach many doctrines that were sound, insomuch that the Lord Christ himself commanded his own

disciples to observe and do whatsoever they taught as necessary to be observed, Matt. 23:3. And if the soundness or rottenness of opinions should be estimated by the goodness or badness of the lives of any parcel or number of persons professing them, as well the opinion of atheism, which denies the being of any God, as the opinion of polytheism, which affirms plurality of gods, must be esteemed better and more sound than that which maintaineth the being of one God, and of one only; for certain it is, that there have been many heathens, professors some of the one and some of the other of those opinions, who have quitted themselves upon far better terms of honour and approbation in their lives than many Christians, professors of the last opinion, have done. It is the observation of a great learned man of this nation, "Atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further; and we see the times inclined to atheism, as the time of Augustus Caesar, and our own times in some countries, were and are civil times." 2. There is, I suppose, a plain reason to be given why that generation of men now under discourse (the popish gang of bishops, with the clergy adoring them for preferment-sake) should, in order to the promoting of their secular interest, take up the doctrine which opposeth the common received doctrine of perseverance; together with those other doctrines, commonly, but I know not how properly or deservedly, called Arminian. It is sufficiently known that the men we speak of were professed enemies to the most religiously zealous party of the ministers in the land, with their adherents, then commonly termed Puritans, whom they both hated and feared, as a generation of men by whom, rather than any other, they apprehended themselves in danger of being dethroned. *Nec eos fefellit opinio*. Upon this account they judged it a very material point of their interest to suppress and keep under this faction, as they termed them. In order hereunto they studied and cast about, how to weaken their interest and repute with the generality of the people, or at least with all those that were intelligent, and in that respect considerable. To this end, wisely considering that nothing was like to prejudice them more in their esteem with such men, than to detect them of error and unsoundness in their doctrine, and perceiving withal, as with half an eye they might, being so fully disengaged, as they were, from all high thoughts of those who held them, that they were not in any doctrines besides, which they were generally known to hold and teach, more obnoxious to such a detection,

than in those which they held and taught in opposition to the remonstrants: hereupon they politically fell to profess and teach remonstrantism, that so they might have the more frequent occasion and opportunity to lay open the nakedness of the Puritan doctrine before the people, and to show the inconsistency of it with the Scriptures, as also with many the most manifest principles; as well of reason as religion besides. Therefore should it be granted that, in the general, there is much in the unworthiness of men, who profess such or such a doctrine or opinion, to render the one or the other suspected, yet in the particular case before us there is nothing at all: because the persons we spoke of did not embrace or take up the opinion or doctrine mentioned, out of any natural compliance they resented in it with their lusts, or any their undue practices, (for such it had none,) hut out of a politique only: and, as Austin sometimes said, it is no disparagement to the sheep, that the wolf sometimes puts on and wears her clothing.

3. And, lastly, it is generally known, that the cathedral generation of men throughout Christendom were generally great admirers of the old learning, as some call it: I mean, the writings and tenets of the fathers, and of Austin more especially; and that they frequently made shield and buckler of their authority, to defend themselves against the pens and opinions of later writers, whom their manner was, according to the exigency of their interest, at least as they conceived, to slight and vilify, in comparison of the other. Now the judgments of the fathers, more generally, and of Austin more particularly, as we shall show in the procedure of our present discourse, stood for the possibility of the saints' defection, both total and final; wherein, it seems, the greater part of our modem reformed divines have departed from them.

Whereas some, to prejudice the minds and affections of men against the doctrine of a possible defection in the saints, with the rest commonly found in the same retinue, cast out such sayings as these, that they never knew any, who fell in with these opinions, but they declined in religion, and in the end came to nothing, they do but spread a snare in the way of the simple: any considering man will laugh such pretences to scorn. Such an allegation as this much sembleth the superstitious advice of those who dissuade the marriages of cousins german, upon the account of this observation of theirs, that such have never prospered. It is very possible that they may have observed and known some miscarriage, disaster, or

less desirable success in one or two of these conjunctions, amongst some of their acquaintance and friends: but what is there in this to create prejudice in the least in the judgment of any well ballasted and considering man, against the whole species of such marriages, more than there is in the frequent miscarriages that are found in all kinds of marriages whatsoever, to disaffect the minds of men against all these also ? If a man should inquire a little after matters of this nature in the world, he shall soon find or hear of many instances of poor persons marrying, who prospered not, of rich persons marrying, who prospered as little; of nobles marrying, whose married condition was little blest from heaven; of princes marrying, to the great affliction or ruin of themselves, &c. Is it now reasonable to infer, from such observations or instances as these, that therefore neither poor men nor rich men, nor nobles nor princes, shall do well or wisely to marry? The allegation in the objection in hand, is of no whit a better genius than such a collection as this. For what though many who have closed in their judgments, or rather made profession of such a closure, with the opinions there mentioned, have lost their savour, withered in their zeal, and put away a good conscience from them; ought or can this, in the judgments of reasonable men, reflect any whit more prejudice upon the said doctrines, than the frequent and daily apostasies and declinings that are made under and from the contrary, yea, under and from the Protestant religion itself; yea, that which is somewhat more, under and from Christianity itself, ought in reason to disparage all these ? We have a common proverb, that one swallow makes not a summer; and to say, that one woodcock makes not a winter, would in time make a proverb of as much truth. But though enough hath been said to evince and maintain the innocency of the doctrine under protection, in respect of any violation of, or intrenchment upon the inward peace and comfort of the saints, yea, and more, I am certain, than can with good reason be gainsaid; yet prejudice, I know, is restless, and thoughts of any long standing in the minds of men hardly removed. Therefore it is like, notwithstanding all that hath been argued hitherto some will still object, and say we cannot yet be satisfied, but that your doctrine of falling away must needs be very uncomfortable, and of sad importance to the saints: because, though there be but a possibility only of their falling away, yet, considering their manifold and great weaknesses and aptness to sin, they must needs be in continual fears, lest



this possibility should be reduced into act. And, therefore, there is nothing that can bless them with any security or peace in this kind, but the knowledge and belief of some such fixed and unchangeable decree of God as this, that, however, they shall never fall away to perdition. Nor is there the same consideration of a saint's refraining from sin, and of a man's forbearing to destroy his natural life by wilful precipitation, poisoning himself, or the like : because the inclination which is in men to preserve their natural lives and beings, and so to refrain all things manifestly destructive to them, is potent, vigorous, and active: whereas the inclination to abstain from sin, which is in the saints, is comparatively weak, much incumbered, and broken by the flesh, the frequent motions and temptations thereof, &c. To these things, and whatsoever may be further pretended in the same kind, I answer,

1. Though that disposition which is in the saints to forbear sin, be neither so free, nor so full of energy and power, as the natural inclination in men to preserve their natural beings; yet, 1.1. Even this inclination itself is not so entire, or so strong, but that it is liable to temptation also, and subject to be encountered, yea, and sometimes is overcome, as in those who, under great pangs and agonies of discontent, lay violent hands upon themselves. Therefore there is no such great disproportion between the one inclination and the other, as the objection supposeth. But,

2. Be it granted, that the propension in the saints to abstain from sin, simply, and in the general, is nothing so energetical or powerful as the natural desire in men to preserve their natural lives; yet possibly it may be, yea, probably it is, every whit as potent and operative in reference to some sins, and particularly to those which are likely to occasion or produce final apostasy.

For though there be in every sin whatsoever a natural tendency, according to the kind, and degree of it, towards apostasy, even that which is final, as there is in every light prick with a pin in a man's finger, towards the dissolution of the natural life; yet as no man is disturbed in his peace and comfort touching the continuance of his health and life, by a drop or two of blood drawn from his finger by the scratch of a pin; so neither is there any reasonable ground, or occasion, why upon the commission of every sin a saint should be struck into a passion of fear of falling away, unless he hath an assurance from heaven that he shall not fall away. They are not sins of infirmity, or sins "quotidiani incursus," as

Austin somewhere calls them, *i. e.* sins of a daily incursion, but only such sins “*quae vastant conscientiam,*” as the schoolmen’s phrase is, *i. e.* that lay waste the conscience, which have any dangerous affinity with falling away. Now I suppose that in respect of such sins as these, the inclination of the saints may well be as strong and free towards a non-commission, or refrainment, as the natural inclination in men is towards a self-preservation.

3. Whether that inclination or disposition in the saints, which we now speak of, be actually, and in the generality of them according to their present conditions, commensurable in strength, power, and every other desirable property, with the inclination in men to preserve their natural beings by the forbearance of all acts whatsoever, apparently destructive to them or no, most certain it is, that God hath vouchsafed unto them a sufficiency of means, yea, means in abundance, to make them every ways commensurable hereunto, yea, to raise them to a higher pitch or degree of strength and power than so; yea, and further hath made them (the saints themselves I mean) every ways capable (all their infirmities and weaknesses considered and allowed for) of the use of these means even to the actual producing of such a glorious and blessed effect as that. So that if the said inclination in them be not every ways as serviceable unto them in securing them against all fears of acting in any way apparently destructive to their great spiritual interest, the saving of their souls, as the other inclination in men is unto them, to secure them from fears of doing any thing knowingly, to the unavoidable loss of their lives, the fault is merely and absolutely in themselves ; and this not through any infirmity or weakness, which is natural to them, and so inseparable, but through a gross, rank, and stupid carelessness and sloth. If thus, then is not the doctrine of falling away any ways prejudicial to the peace and comfort of the saints, in respect of itself, but merely accidentally and occasionally, viz. as the saints will voluntarily, and without any necessity either from within, or from without, compelling them, break out into such extravagances of sin, which, that doctrine being true, may justly fill them with fears of falling away and perishing. But let me say this too (which here is not to be omitted) that even the assertors themselves of the common doctrine of perseverance do affirm and teach, that their doctrine itself notwithstanding, the saints under such extravagances of sin; as we speak of, can have no comfort, peace, or assurance of salvation, and

consequently no assurance of persevering in faith unto the end. Therefore by their own confessions and tenor of discourse, there is no such great difference between the two doctrines, in reference to the peace or comfort of the saints; the one (I mean that of perseverance) leaving them obnoxious unto fears and doubtings as well as the other, yea, if sentence were given between them according to truth, that of perseverance must be adjudged, not only to leave the saints under a possibility or capacity of discomfiture and fear, (which indeed the other doth,) but under a sore temptation also, as we have formerly proved, of tormenting themselves with such fears, which the other doth not.

If it be demanded, But what are the means which God hath given (as I say) so abundantly unto the saints, to make themselves as free, as strong in inclination to avoid things apparently destructive to their spiritual peace and salvation of their souls, as naturally men are to forbear all such actions which are apparently destructive to their natural lives, so that they need not be any whit more afraid of losing their souls through their own actings, than men are, or need to be, of destroying their natural lives upon the same terms ? I answer,

1. There is nothing which endangereth the salvation of the soul but sin; yea, there is nothing that causeth this danger to any much considerable or formidable degree, but only such sins which, are notoriously manifest unto the saints, if not by the light of nature, yet by the light of grace and of the Scriptures; manifest, I mean, not only or simply as or that they are sins, hut manifest also according to that relation wherein we now speak of them, *i.e.* as and that they are sins threatening as it were with a loud voice destruction to their souls.

2. He hath given them eyes wherewith, and light whereby, clearly and evidently to see and know, that it is not more rational or manlike for men to refrain all such actions, which they know they cannot perform but to the present and unavoidable destruction of their natural lives, than it is to forbear all sinful acts whatsoever, and especially all such which are apparently destructive to their souls.

3. God hath not only given them the eyes, and the light we speak of, wherewith, and whereby clearly to see and understand the things mentioned, but hath further endued them with a faculty of consideration, wherewith to reflect upon and review, to weigh and ponder, as oft as they please, what they see, understand, and know in this kind. Now

whatsoever a man is capable, 1. Of seeing and knowing; 2. Of pondering and considering, he is capable of raising or working an inclination in himself towards it, answerable in strength, vigour, and power, to any degree of goodness or desirableness which he is able to apprehend therein. For what is an inclination towards any thing, as suppose towards an act or course and frequency of actions, but a propension and leaning, as it were, of the heart and soul towards it? And how comes the heart or soul of a man to propend or lean towards any thing but by apprehending and considering somewhat that is, seemingly at least, if not really also, good for him therein ? And the greater the good is that is apprehended herein, and the clearer, the more raised and multiplied the apprehension is, the greater proportionably, the fuller of strength, vigour, and power must the propension and inclination of the heart and soul needs be thereunto. So that if, 1. There be worth and goodness sufficient in any object whatsoever to bear it; and, 2. If a man be in a capacity of discovering and apprehending this good clearly; and, 3. Be in a like capacity of revising or considering this his vision as oft as he pleaseth, certainly he is in a capacity and at liberty to work himself to what strength or degree of desire and inclination towards it he pleaseth. Now, evident and certain it is to every man, or else easily may be, 1. That there is more good in abstaining from things, either eminently dangerous or apparently destructive to his soul, than in forbearing things apparently destructive to his natural being. 2. As evident it is that every man is capable of attaining, or coming to the certain knowledge of, and of clearly apprehending this excess of good to him in the former above the latter. 3. Neither is it a thing less evident than either of the former, that every man is as capable of ruminating or re-apprehending the said excess of good as much and as oft as he pleaseth, as he is simply of apprehending it. All which supposed as undeniably true, it follows with a high hand, and above all contradiction, that the saints may, and have means and opportunities fair and full for the purpose, plant an inclination or disposition in themselves to refrain all manner of sins apparently dangerous and destructive to the safety of their souls, fuller of energy, vigour, life, strength, power, than that natural inclination in them which teacheth them to refrain all actions which they know must needs be accompanied with the destruction of their natural beings. Therefore, if they be more, yea, or so much, afraid of destroying their lives voluntarily

and knowingly, as by casting themselves into the fire, or the water, or the like, than they are of falling away through sin, the fault or reason hereof, is not at all in that doctrine which affirms and informs them that there is a possibility that they may fall away, but in themselves, and in their voluntary negligence: they have means and opportunities, as we have proved, in abundance, to render themselves every whit as secure, yea, and more secure, touching the latter, as they are, or reasonably can be, concerning the former, The possibility they live under of destroying their natural lives with their own hands doth not occasion the least trouble or fear of death in them in such a way: nor needs the possibility they lie under of falling away, being grounded only upon a possibility of their own voluntary actings, occasion the least disturbance, uncomfortableness, or fear in their spirits, that they shall fall away. Therefore,

2. To the main objection in hand, I answer further: concerning the manifold weaknesses of the saints, their aptness to sin, &c., these indeed are sufficient and proper to cause them to fear, but not the fear of falling away from God or from his grace, but that fear which the Scripture is wont to oppose to highmindedness. “Be not highminded, but fear,” Rom. 11:20. This fear is nothing else but a humble reflection upon a man’s own weakness and insufficiency to stand in his own strength, which necessarily draweth along with it a humble dependence upon God for strength whereby to stand, together with an acknowledgment of strength, received from him when and whilst he doth stand. This is evident from that of the apostle: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” *i. e.* with humility, with a sense and acknowledgment of no sufficiency as from yourselves for so important a work; “for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” Phil. 2:12, 13 ; *i.e.* you are debtors unto him both for every disposition you find in yourselves to act, and likewise for every action wherein you do act, in order to your salvation. But of this passage of Scripture more hereafter, God willing. In the meantime, Certain it is that the infirmities and weaknesses of the saints, through which they are apt to sin, do not require any such decree in God which includeth in it an impossibility of their falling away, to render them secure from or against such falling: for as the lighter crosses and discontents which men daily meet with in their household affairs, conversings with men, and dealings in the world, bring

them into no danger or fear of making away themselves or destroying their own lives, though there be no absolute decree of God to secure them in this behalf, the natural desire of self-preservation which God hath planted in them, easily overruling, by the power and strength of it, all notions or dispositions towards self-destroying which are wont to arise from, such occasions. In like manner, the strength of that inclination or desire which is or ought to be, and very possibly, as hath been proved, might be in the saints to save their souls, and consequently to preserve themselves from apostasy, is sufficient, without any such decree of God as was mentioned, to secure them both from all danger and from all fear of apostatising to destruction, notwithstanding all weaknesses or infirmities that they are subject unto. The truth is, that the infirmities and weaknesses of the saints, as such, are so far from being any necessary or just ground of fear unto them that they shall fall away; that the sense and acknowledgment of them are most clear, pregnant, and effectual antidotes and preservatives against falling away: for he that is inwardly and truly sensible of his own weakness and inability to stand, will, especially being a saint or believer, most certainly depend upon him for strength who is both able and willing to supply and furnish him upon such terms.

3. And lastly, upon the former account, and for a close of this chapter, I answer, that if the doctrine of falling away be so uncomfortable unto the saints as the objection pretends, the truth is, as we have in the premises of this chapter made it appear, they, are not much relieved at this point by the received doctrine of perseverance ; for this doctrine, as hath been shown, scarce suffereth any man to believe upon any rational, competent, or sufficient grounds that he is a true saint or believer, yea, and doth little less than tempt him to such things which are exceeding apt and likely to fill him with fears and questionings touching the truth of his faith. And what great comfort can it then be unto him to hear or believe that true believers cannot fall away or perish? whereas the other doctrine leaveth them a good latitude of competent ground whereon to judge themselves true saints and true believers: nor doth it deprive them of sufficient ground on which to secure themselves both against the danger and against all fear of danger of apostatising or falling away to perdition. This doctrine, therefore, of the two, is questionless of the more benevolous aspect and influence upon the peace and comforts of the saints.



## CHAPTER 10.

**A continuation of the former digression; wherein the texts of Scripture commonly alleged to prove the impossibility of saints' declining unto death, are taken into consideration, and discharged from that service.**

BEING occasioned, and, after a sort, necessitated, for the securing of some passages of interpretation, (chap, 8.) being of main concernment to the principal cause undertaken in this discourse, to engage home in the question about perseverance, I should, according to ordinary method, and that hitherto observed in the traverse of the main doctrine, first, have argued my sense and judgment in the question GREEK, assertively; and then GREEK, *i. e.* by answering such objections, whether from Scripture or otherwise, which are wont to be levied by men of contrary judgment in opposition thereunto. But finding by experience that weaker men, through too much fulness and abundance, in their own sense, in matters of controversy, and this chiefly by means of some texts of Scripture running still, and working in their heads, which in sound of words, and surface of letter, seem to stand by them in their sense and notion, are under a very great disadvantage, either for minding or understanding such things which are spoken unto them for their information in the truth; I thought it best, for their relief in this case, to invert that method in the present dispute; and first to endeavour to take from them those weapons, whether of Scripture or argument, wherein they trust; and afterwards present them with such other Scriptures and grounds which are able, pregnant, and proper, to build them up, and establish them in the truth. We shall not tie ourselves to any rule, or prescript of order, in bringing those Scriptures upon the theatre of our discourse, which men of differing judgment in the cause in hand are wont to plead in defence thereof, themselves, as far as I have observed, observing none ; but shall produce them one by one, as God shall please to bring them to mind, unless, haply, two or more of them, by reason of affinity or likeness in phrase or import, may commodiously enough be handled together. Most of the places compelled to serve in this warfare I find situate in the New Testament. The first that cometh to hand is that of our Saviour unto Peter, "And upon this Rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell



shall not prevail against it,” Matt. 16:18. From hence it is argued, that those that are once built by faith upon the Rock, Christ, or upon the truth of the gospel, are not in danger, or in a possibility of being prevailed against, viz., to destruction, by all the powers of darkness whatsoever. I answer,

1. That this promissory assertion of Christ, “the gates of hell shall not prevail,” &c., doth not necessarily respect every individual and single person who *de praesenti* is a member of his church, so as to secure him of his salvation, against all possible sins, or ways of sinning, whereunto he may or can be drawn by Satan; but may well be understood of the church in general, *i.e.* considered as a body of men, separate and distinguished from the world. Now the church, in this sense, may be said to stand, and be secured against all the power and attempts of the devil, though not only some, but even all the particular saints, of which this body consists at present, should be prevailed against by Satan to destruction. Because the ratio formalis, or essence of the church, in this sense, doth not consist in the persons of those who do at present believe, and so are members of it; for then it would follow, that in case these should die, or when they shall die, Christ should have no church at all upon the earth, inasmuch as nothing can be without the essence of it; but in the successive generation of those who, in their respective times, believe, whether they be fewer or whether they be more, whether they be such and such persons, or whether others. As suppose there be not now one drop of that water in the channel of the river of Thames, as it is like there is not, which was in it seven years since, yet is it one and the same river which it was then: and so put the case there be not one person now alive in any of the companies in London of which they respectively consisted forty years since, yet are they the self same companies which they were then. So, then, the saying of Christ; that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church,” may stand clear and firm, though many particular members thereof should be overcome. Therefore there is nothing in this Scripture to evince that universal perseverance of all saints which is commonly taught and received amongst us.

2. When our Saviour promiseth that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church,” his meaning, questionless, is this, that death, or the grave, which may very properly be called “the gates of hell,” because they that go, or are sent to hell, enter by them thereinto, or else that hell itself

“shall not prevail,” *i. e.* shall not have a full or final conquest over those that shall die, built upon the rock he speaks of, by faith, as, by reason of their most formidable strength, they are like to have over all other men. According to this interpretation, his meaning only is, that those that shall continue firmly built upon him by faith shall in time be rescued and delivered out of the hand of all adverse powers, yea, from death and the grave themselves, the most formidable of all others.

This exposition fully accords with what Chrysostom hath upon the place. “If,” saith he, paraphrasing the words of Christ, “they shall not prevail against it, (‘my church,’) much more shall they not prevail against me. Therefore, be not troubled when thou shalt hear that I shall be betrayed and crucified.” These words clearly imply, that by “the prevailing of the gates of hell,” the author understands the final prevailing of death or the grave; and not the prevailing of Satan by subtlety or temptations in one kind or other.

Amongst our late Protestant divines, Cameron, who commonly Strikes as happy a stroke in opening the Scriptures which he undertakes as any man, doth not only deliver, but with a high hand asserts, argues, and evinceth this interpretation. “This then,” saith he, “seems to have been the mind of Christ in this place: Let those who believe, lie for a time dead, let death have dominion over them, let death exercise his right (or execute his law) upon them, hold them fast shut up in the grave, as in a prison, bound with bands or fetters, yet shall he not always have his will over them; he may or shall do much against them, but shall never have a full conquest over them.” This exposition he confirms, 1, by instancing several other places of Scripture, as Job 38:17; Psa. 9:13; 108:18; in all which, by “the gates of hell,” or of death, is clearly meant the grave. To which he adds, Psa. 18:16, and 116:3, as places of affinity with these. 2. By showing that the word GREEK, here translated hell, is never in Scripture, except once, used to signify hell, properly so called, *i. e.* the place or state of the damned, but constantly, either the grave, or the state and condition of those that are dead. 3. By minding us that GREEK and GREEK, the grave and death, are elsewhere termed the enemies of the church, yea, the last enemies, as 1 Cor. 15:26 ; to which he adds, the consideration of their being “cast into the lake of fire,” Rev. 20:14.

4. And lastly, by particular arguments against every other interpretation offered by expositors.

Musculus, though by the gates of hell he understands as well the policy as power and strength of the devil, yet by the relative particle GREEK, it, he doth not understand the church, but the rock, or foundation of doctrine on which the church is built. So that his sense of the place seems to be this: that that doctrine on which the church is built is so firm and strong, that all the policy and power of Satan, though joining together, shall never be able to prevail against it, so as either to evict it of falsehood, or otherwise to destroy and cast it out of the world. None of all their interpretations suppose any such thing deducible from the place as this, that those who are once believers, or members of the church of Christ, shall never be seduced by Satan to destruction. The place speaks nothing of Satan, much less of his subtlety, policy, or power to seduce the church; but supposing the exceeding great and formidable strength of death and the grave, asserteth the glorious and final conquest of his church over them notwithstanding. So that this passage of Scripture perfectly sembleth with these and the like: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," John 11:25. And again: "And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," John 6:39. See also John 5:25, 28, 29, &c.

That which is pleaded by some for such a sense of the place, which carries the doctrine of perseverance in it, is weak and valueless. Whatsoever, say these, opposeth the building of the church upon the rock, or the constant adhering of it unto Christ, is meant by the gates of hell prevailing. For, in these words, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Christ must needs be supposed to remove whatsoever is contrary to that which he had asserted in those, "And upon this rock will I build my church." But the politic and subtle temptations of Satan to seduce believers, are opposite to the building of the church upon the rock, and to the constant adhering of it unto Christ. Therefore, by the gates of hell not prevailing against the church, must needs be meant the defeature or non-prevailing of the stratagems or counsels of Satan against believers; and consequently, their persevering unto the end. For to this I answer,

1. By denying the major proposition in the argument. For that which Christ takes away in this clause, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it,” is not whatsoever opposeth the building of his church upon the rock, but whatsoever opposeth the happiness of it being so built, and adhering constantly and perseveringly unto him. For the pronoun relative GREEK, it, doth not relate to the verb GREEK, I will build, but to the substantive GREEK, church.

2. Whereas, in the said proposition, Christ’s building of his church, is expounded by the constant adhering of his church unto him, that which is the principal thing in question is taken for granted: which is very inargumentative. For the matter in question is, whether the church of Christ, in all the members of it once built upon the rock, must, or doth necessarily so adhere to him.

3, and lastly, The said exposition renders a sense very preposterous and importune. For upon this account, Christ should speak at no better rate of reason than thus: “The gates of hell shall not prevail,” *i. e.* the subtlety, policy, and machinations of Satan shall not be able to seduce those that are “built upon the rock,” *i. e.* that constantly adhere unto Christ. Which amounts to no more than if he should have said, the devil shall not be able to make those inconstant who shall be and remain constant, or to cause those who shall firmly adhere unto Christ, not to adhere firmly to him. Which strain of discourse, whether it becomes him who spake as never man spake, I leave unto sober men to judge.

Another argument urged by some against the interpretation given is this: If by the “prevailing of the gates of hell,” be meant nothing else but the eternal condemnation of, or perpetual prevailing of death against the church, then Christ here promiseth nothing, but only in the behalf of those that are dead; and consequently nothing but what may stand with a total defection of his church on earth. But this seems to be contrary to his intention in the place, *ergo*. I answer,

1. It is no inconvenience to suppose or grant that Christ in this place, and in the promise here mentioned, doth not insure the perpetual continuance or residence of a church on earth, no more than he doth in many promises which are yet of very high and blessed importance in their respective kinds. In that great evangelical promise, “Whosoever believes shall be saved,” there is nothing but what may possibly stand with an universal defection of a church on earth; yet is the promise great and precious. It were easy to instance many others of like nature. But,

2. As in the promise last mentioned, though there be nothing which

necessarily includes an uninterrupted succession of believers in the world, yet is there that which exceeding much conduceth towards the propagation and raising of such a succession as, viz. a promissory proposal of the greatest reward that is unto whosoever shall believe, even no less than that of eternal life; so may it be said concerning this promise of Christ, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here is enough said, if men would but consider and quit themselves like men, to replenish the earth with a generation of believers like unto the waters of a river, which fail not. Therefore,

3. and lastly, It is not truly said that this promise, "And the gates of hell shall not," &c., in the sense asserted, relates only to those that are dead. The truth is, that if we speak properly, neither this nor any other promise whatsoever relates only, if at all, unto the dead, or is made only on the behalf of the dead: the dead, in propriety of speech, are utterly incapable of promises, though, not of performances of promises. But clearly this, and all other promises, are made to the living, and for their accommodation and comfort, though for the letter and reality of the performance of them they are not to be partakers hereof, until they have undergone the state and condition of death. It is just matter of joy unspeakable and glorious to him that is yet living to know and consider, that though he dieth, yet death shall not have any such dominion over him but what he shall shake off, and that with a blessed advantage and conquest, in due time. But this exception against the exposition asserted, is but like a mote in the sun, which darkeneth not at all the rays of light thereof, but only gains, by being here, a discovery of itself to be a thing inconsiderable and next to nothing.

Another passage of Scripture "compelled to bear the cross," of the same service with the former, is that, Matt. 24:24, "*For* there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall [or should] deceive the very elect." From hence it is inferred, that the deceiving or seducement of those who truly believe is a thing impossible. But whether the drawing of such conclusions as this from such Scriptures as that be not a drawing of darkness out of light, the considerations ensuing will be competent enough to determine.

1. In their notion who try to fetch the water of perseverance out of the flint of the Scripture mentioned, the word "elect" doth not signify saints,

or true believers, but such as they suppose to have been, in a personal consideration, chosen by God from eternity out of the great body of mankind, with an intent to save them against all possible interveniences or oppositions whatsoever. Now that such as these, at least before their calling, are as liable to be deceived or seduced as other men, is their own confession, without fear; and the apostle Paul, to whom, questionless, they will not deny the grace of their election, acknowledgeth himself, with Titus, to have sometimes been foolish, disobedient, and *deceived*, Tit. 3:3. Yea,

2. It is frequently confessed by the same party, that such “elect” as they mean, and we lately described, may, even after they are called and have believed, by the just and wise sufferance of God, fall into heresy, and this in fundamental points; yea, and into that fearful sin of an abnegation and abjuration of Christ and Christian religion. If so, then certainly there is no impossibility of their seduction. Yea, the great patrons of the doctrine of perseverance, which managed the conference at the Hague about these questions, anno 1611, acknowledged, that even “true believers may fall so far as that the church, according to the command of Christ, shall be compelled to testify [against them] that they cannot [bear or] tolerate them in their outward communion, and that they shall have no part in the kingdom of Christ, except they repent” [or he converted.] Doubtless they who, having once truly believed, become afterwards incapable of having part in the kingdom of Christ without conversion or repentance, give a loud testimony that there is no impossibility for true saints or true believers to be deceived, and that to the highest and most dangerous pitch of all.

If it be here said, Yea, but the Scripture in hand is to be understood of a final deceiving, or of a being deceived unto destruction; and thus (it is there supposed that) the elect cannot possibly be deceived, I answer,

1. This is to presume, not to argue or believe; for there is not the least ground, or so much as the smallest sand, in either the words or context, whereon to build such an interpretation as this.

2. The abettors of this interpretation are wont to prove from the words not only an impossibility that the saints should finally be deceived, but also that they should be deceived totally, *i. e.* so as to be at any time wholly destitute or bereft of that faith which is justifying and saving.

3, and lastly, The same men suppose, that if the saints may fall away

totally at any time, they may fall away finally also. If it be said, that they cannot fall away totally ; I answer, if so, then one of these three things must needs follow; either, 1. That true, saving, and justifying faith may stand, not only with heresy, and this in fundamental articles of Christian religion, but even with an express abnegation and abjuration of Christ himself with his religion; or else, 2. That their opinion is false who affirm that true believers may possibly fall, both into such heresy and such abnegation; or, 3, and lastly, That they who do fall both into the one or the other, are not seduced or deceived. This last is manifestly false: the second is the sense and confession of our adversaries themselves, viz. that true believers may fall into such heresy and abnegation. For the first, if saving faith may stand with such heresy and abnegation of Christ as is there spoken of, how will that of Christ himself stand, “ Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven ?” Matt. 10:32. To reply here, and say that it is to be understood of a final denial, will not at all salve the sore; for there is the same consideration of a denial of Christ, as to the ejecting of a man out of his favour, whether it be final, and in the end of a man’s days, or whether it be in the middle of them. Nor hath Christ any whit more reason to be offended with him that denieth him at one time than with him who denieth him at another, if there be nothing but merely time to make the difference. It is true, he that denieth Christ in the middle of his days, and so casteth himself out of his favour, may possibly recover his favour again by repentance, and a renewed confession of him before men, which he that denieth him at the instant of death cannot; but, as for the nature and demerit of the sin, and, consequently, in order to the just judgment of Christ upon it, it is the same in both cases. But,

3. Further to demonstrate the nullity of the aforesaid deduction from the place in hand, it is to be known and considered that this phrase or expression, GREEK, “if it be possible,” doth not always, if at any time, import the impossibility of a thing, but only the difficulty of a thing on the one hand, and the exquisite diligence and endeavours of those on the other hand, in respect of such difficulty, who attempt it. Thus, the evangelist Luke, speaking of Paul, saith, that “he hasted, GREEK, *if it were possible* for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost,” Acts 20:16. The light of the sun at noon-day is not more clear, than that “ if it be possible ” doth not here signify or imply an impossibility; for then the

meaning must be, that Paul made all the haste he could to do that which was impossible for him to do. To say, that Paul might be ignorant whether his being at Jerusalem by Pentecost was possible or no, and that he only resolved to make trial of the truth herein to the uttermost, is to asperse this great apostle with a ridiculous imputation of ignorance, yea, of such ignorance which is not lightly incident to men of the shallowest capacities ; for who, almost, can be so ignorant as not to know whether it be a thing simply impossible to make such or such a port by such or such a time, or no ? It is true, wise men may be ignorant whether they shall, with their best diligence and despatch, be able to make it within the time they desire, and thus far I can grant that Paul might be ignorant; but that he should be ignorant of so broad and vast a difference as lieth between a possibility and impossibility of the thing, I must borrow some other man's fancy to conceive. However, let the apostle suffer the disparagement of such an ignorance as this, yet neither will this evince an impossibility of his being at Jerusalem by Pentecost to be here implied by this phrase, GREEK, " if it be possible," but only some doubtfulness or difficulty in the thing, together with his utmost endeavour to compass it notwithstanding. In the like sense the same clause is used, Rom, 12:8: GREEK, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, have peace with all men." If we shall suppose that "if it be possible" here supposeth an impossibility, the sense of the sentence must run thus: "As much as in you lieth," do that which you cannot do, or which is impossible for you to do; which is a sound that Paul's trumpet was never like to make. Excepting the parallel place in Mark, the phrase is but twice more, to my present remembrance, used in the New Testament, viz., Matt. 26:39, and Gal. 4:15, in neither of which places can it reasonably be supposed to import an impossibility. But,

4. Touching the place in hand, that here it only imports a difficulty, as hath been said, of deceiving the elect, *i. e.* believers, together with the most raised and vehement intentions or desires in the false prophets to effect it notwithstanding, appears yet more plainly from the evangelist Mark, who records the same passage thus : "For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders, GREEK, *to seduce*, if it were possible, the very elect," Mark 13:22, *i. e.* with an intent, raised out of great and strong desires, to draw off believers themselves from adhering unto the true Christ and Messiah, born of the Virgin, and



to follow and embrace them in his stead. Yea, it is no ways like, but that they had a far greater desire to practise their seducing arts upon these, and to draw these after them, than any other sort of men; because these had set up and upheld such a competitor with them in the world, who was like to carry away the world from them, unless they could prevail with his followers to disown and disclaim him. The great difficulty which was in the primitive times, and whilst these false Christs rose up one after another in the world, to work off believers from the true Christ, appears in part by that proverbial saying in Galen, “ A man may sooner unteach men Christianity or, teach men away from Christ. And Austin somewhere reports that a man, repairing to Apollo s oracle to inquire what course he should take to draw off his wife from Christianity, received this answer, “that he might more easily either write letters in a swift stream, or fly in the air.” But notwithstanding the difficulty of the thing, that yet sometimes it was done appears from that passage of Tertullian. “ For, saying,” saith he, speaking of Christ, “that many should come, and show signs, and do great wonders, *yea, and turn away the elect* themselves, and that all this notwithstanding they were not to be received, he plainly shows that a faith built upon signs and wonders is rash and inconsiderate, and such as is easy for false Christs” (to attempt or procure).

5. If the phrase, GREEK, if it be possible, shall here be conceived to import an absolute impossibility, the necessity, efficacy, and power of the Lord Christ’s prediction, and caution, will fall to the ground. For he who would have those to whom he speaketh certainly to believe that they are elect, and again, to believe also that it is a thing impossible for the elect to be seduced by any means whatsoever, certainly hath no necessity, scarce the lightest occasion or pretence that can be imagined, to caution these men against seducers. And what can be more ridiculous, than in a most grave, serious, and solemn manner, to admonish a man to take heed of that, which yet withal we do assure him is impossible should befall him ? Yea,

6. According to the known principles of those with whom we have now to do, whether the apostles to whom Christ speaketh in the words in hand, knew themselves to be elect, or no, yea, or whether they were elect, or no, there could be no great necessity or occasion why Christ should thus solemnly arm them against seducers. If they were elect, the sense of these

men is, that whether they had been thus armed or no, they could not have fallen in the day of battle; as, on the other hand, in case they were not elected, that neither this nor any other armour, or cautionary provision whatsoever, could be able to make them stand or keep them alive.

That which is commonly pleaded at such turnings as this, is very light and impertinent. “God,” say our antagonists, “as he wills the end, so also he willeth and enjoineeth the means for the accomplishment of the end. So in the particular in hand; Christ, as he willeth the non-seduction of the elect, so he willeth also that they should beware of seducers, as a means tending to that end.” For to this we answer,

1. Though it be very true that God, who willeth the end, willeth and prescribeth the means also, viz. when he declares the end not to be otherwise attainable, than in and by the use of such means as he prescribeth in order hereunto; yet when he hath irreversibly decreed that the end shall certainly be obtained, or that he will interpose by a high and irresistible hand for the effecting of it, and withal hath declared either the one or the other, or both of these his decrees unto the world, it is now no ways consistent with his wisdom to enjoin men the use of any means for the obtaining of this end, especially under the penalty or threatening of a non-obtaining it. Nor can any instance be produced from the Scripture, where any means have been directed or enjoined by him upon such terms. As for that, which some allege from Acts 27:22, compared with 31, it no ways reacheth the business. For evident it is from that, verse 31, where Paul saith to the centurion and soldiers, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved that that promissory encouragement which he delivers unto them, verse 22, upon what was said unto him in vision by God, verse 24, viz. “that there should be no loss of any man’s life amongst them,” was but conditional, and not absolute; and consequently, that the saving of their lives did depend upon their continuing in the ship, and that so, that had they not continued here they had perished, the promise of God made unto Paul concerning their safety notwithstanding. Which clearly proves this promise of God to have been conditional, and the meaning of it only this, “there shall be no loss of any man’s life amongst you,” viz. if you will follow the counsel of God for your preservation, and not destroy your lives yourselves by rejecting it. There is nothing more frequent in Scripture than hypothetical promises in categorical forms; I mean, than conditional promises delivered in positive

or absolute terms. But hereof we shall have frequent occasion to take knowledge in the present discourse.

2. Though God, who willeth the end, willeth and appointeth means for the obtaining the end, upon the terms expressed, yet we cannot suppose that he exhorteth and presseth men to use means in order to the obtaining of such or such an end, which himself gives assurance unto them that they shall obtain, whether they use the means or no. For *it* being the hope and desire of obtaining the end which render the means, otherwise unpleasant and unacceptable, desirable unto men; evident it is, that he who gives assurance unto them of obtaining the end howsoever, *i.* whether they use the means or no, destroyeth the energy and force of any such exhortation, wherein the use of the means shall be recommended unto them, or they persuaded thereunto. He that shall ensure me that whether I run or no, I shall be crowned, and shall afterwards exhort me to run that I may be crowned, shall doubtless pull down that with his promise, which he seeks to build up by his exhortation.

If it be replied and said; But God assureth no man that he shall not be deceived or seduced, but only in and by the use of means that he may not be seduced; I answer, if so, then God hath made no peremptory decree concerning the non-seducement of the elect, nor other, than with which the seducement of them may very possibly stand. For that which depends upon any deliberate or elective act of the will of man, cannot be said to be positively, peremptorily, or absolutely decreed by God; nor is it any other, in the nature and condition of it, than what may very possibly not be. Now certain it is, that the use of means to prevent seduction in the elect, is such an act, or series of actions, which depends upon the deliberate act of their will; at least so far, that it can never take place or be, without a deliberate concurrency hereof.

If it be yet further said; Though the use of means to prevent seduction in the elect, depends upon the deliberate motions and actings of their wills thus far, that it cannot take place, or be performed without them; yet may it have such a relation unto, or dependence upon, the absolute will or decree of God, which shall give certainty and infallibility of being unto it notwithstanding. For God is able so to interpose by his excellency of power in all the deliberations of men, as to carry and fix the issues and determinations of them which way, and upon what he pleaseth. To this I answer: that the question is not what God is able by the excellency of his

power to do in this kind, but what he is pleased to do, or what he hath decreed to do out of the counsel and liberty of his will. And that which we affirm and plead in the cause depending, is not that God is not able to determine the wills of the elect to the use of means proper and sufficient to prevent their being deceived, but that he hath nowhere declared himself willing or resolved to do it; and consequently, that it is an GREEK, a conceit above what is written, to think that he doth it. Therefore, until it be proved, either from the Scriptures, or by the light of some solid demonstration otherwise, that God hath absolutely decreed the non-seduction of the elect, we still speak of a seduction to destruction, or which is the same, upon our adversaries' grant and plea lately mentioned, the determination of their wills to the use of means necessary to secure them against seduction, we judge ourselves free in conscience to deny the pretended impossibility of the saints' deception or seduction.

Another Scripture much discoursed in the behalf of the common doctrine of perseverance is, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Peter 1:5. From hence it is frequently concluded, that they who once truly believe, and are regenerate, (verse 3,) are kept by the engagement of the mighty power of God from falling away to destruction. I answer,

1. That it is not here said, that regenerate men are kept simply and absolutely by the power of God unto salvation, but that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; which plainly implieth, that the power of God here spoken of, engageth not for no man's preservation or safe-guarding unto salvation, but by the mediation of faith, or any while longer than their faith shall continue. Now, here being nothing said or implied touching the certainty of the continuance of the faith of the saints unto the end, nor concerning any engagement of the power of God for the perpetuation thereof, evident it is that nothing can be concluded from hence for the establishment of the said doctrine of perseverance. But, 2. For the clear sense and importance of the place it is this, that men once begotten by God to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, have, or may have, the greatest security, which the infinite power of God can afford, that persevering in that faith, from whence this hope issueth, unto the end, they shall be saved. The place, according to this interpretation, runs parallel in sense and import with these and their fellows:— "But he that shall endure to the end shall be saved," Matt.

24:13, viz. against all opposition and contradiction of impediments whatsoever. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” Rev. 2:10. So with that lately opened, “Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matt. 16:18; to which you may add, John 10:18, 19; Eph. 1:19, with many others.

This exposition perfectly accords with Bullinger’s commentary upon the place. “In the meantime,” saith he, “let this suffice us, that eternal happiness is in safety for us, or to us, which no either man or devil, can intercept or deprive us of, unless faith fails us, wherewith, neglecting the things which mortal men so much seek after, let us wholly depend upon heaven.” In the clause, “modo ne nos deficiat tides,” so that faith fail us not, he clearly supposeth,

1. A possibility that our present faith may fail us. 2. That in case it shall fail us we may perish, notwithstanding any thing here delivered by the apostle concerning our being kept by the power of God unto salvation.

If against this interpretation it shall be objected that it greatly depresseth, and in a manner quencheth the spirit of the consolation, clearly intended by the Holy Ghost to be administered unto the saints in the words ; and that it makes very little for their comfort, to hear of their being kept unto salvation by God, or by his power, in case this keeping depends upon their continuance in faith, especially if this also be uncertain and depending upon themselves, their diligence and care to procure it; I answer,

1. That the heart of this objection was broken in the former chapter, where we showed that in matters of greatest consequence, and most desirable in things appertaining to this life, yea, as to life itself, the most timorous and cautious men neither wish nor desire any greater security than to have what they desire assured unto them upon their own willingness and care, either for the procurement or the continued enjoyment of it. The most impotent lover of life under heaven, and he that lives in the greatest bondage in the world through fear of death, would both of them be highly satisfied, if God would but vouchsafe such a promise as this unto them, that so long as they should desire the continuance of their lives, and take heed of destroying them themselves by unnatural or desperate courses, as by casting themselves into the fire, into the water, down from high towers, &c. he would secure them against all other interveniences, or means of dissolution whatsoever. In like

manner, it is and ought to be so esteemed by the saints, a consolation rich and glorious that God hath undertaken and engaged himself by the greatness of his power to preserve them against all enemies, and threatening obstacles and oppositions whatsoever for his heavenly kingdom, only upon condition that they shall not willingly, wilfully, desperately destroy themselves, or render themselves incapable of such his preservation, by apostatising from that faith in his Son Jesus Christ, which he by his especial grace hath planted in them, and by which they stand at present in favour and acceptance with him.

2. Though God hath not simply and absolutely undertaken for their perseverance or continuation of their faith unto the end, nor upon any such terms, but that if they will be brutishly and desperately careless of so high a concernment to themselves as a blessed eternity is, they may make defection from it, and turn proselytes to hell; yet hath he laid a rich foundation for their perseverance, in those many precious promises and encouragements, which he hath given unto those who shall persevere, as also in those most severe and dreadful threatenings, bent against the faces of all apostates and backsliders, together with those frequent promises or declarations which he hath made to continue, yea, and to enlarge, upon occasion, the inward contributions of his Spirit, the motions, excitements, and directions thereof, in order to the plentiful enabling of his saints to persevere, until they shall willingly and wilfully turn their backs upon them, and reject them. Upon the account of all these gracious promises and declarations made by God unto his saints for or towards the effectual accomplishment of their perseverance, the apostle Paul frequently encourageth them to the hope and expectation of it. "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil," 2 Thess. 3:3. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 1:8. God, according to the common dialect and notion of Scripture language, is said to establish, confirm, and keep men from evil, when he doth that which is of a proper tendency, and sufficient thereunto, whether the effects or ends themselves of establishment, confirmation, &c., be actually obtained or no, for there is nothing more frequent or familiar in Scripture than to ascribe the effects themselves, sometimes unto God, sometimes unto men, only upon their respective actings or doings of such things which are of a natural, proper, and direct tendency to produce them, whether

they he actually and de facto produced or no. Thus our Saviour chargeth him, who shall put away his wife for any other cause than fornication, with causing her to commit fornication; whether the woman thus put away committeth fornication or no, Matt. 5:32; viz., because in that act of putting her away upon such terms, he doth that which hath a proper and direct tendency to cause her to commit this sin. For it is not necessary to suppose that every woman thus divorced or put away, committeth, or will commit fornication. But whether she doth or no, the sin of him that put her away is one and the same; he, in our Saviour's dialect, caused her to commit fornication. Thus, also, he who eats to the offence of a weak brother, is charged by the apostle with "Destroying him with his meat, for whom Christ died," Rom. 14:15, 20, *i. e.* with doing that which is apt and proper to occasion his destruction, whether he be actually destroyed or no. In this idiom, likewise, of speaking, God expressly saith, that he had purged Jerusalem, and yet in the same place saith, also, that Jerusalem, notwithstanding, was not purged. "In thy filthiness is lewdness," *i. e.* notorious and desperate obstinacy, "because I *have purged thee, and thou wast not purged*, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee," Ezek. 24:13. God is said to have purged Jerusalem, because he vouchsafed proper and sufficient means unto her for her purging, as the ministry of his word and Spirit, frequent admonitions, exhortations, expostulations, promises, threatenings, &c., by his prophets, however Jerusalem by her rebellious obstinacy, hindered and obstructed the thorough and kindly working of these means, by reason whereof the desirable effect of her purging was not obtained. In such a sense and phrase as this, the goodness of God is said to lead such men to repentance, who yet are so far from repenting, that "after their hardness, and impenitent heart, they treasure up wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath," &c., Rom. 2:4, 5; meaning, that the goodness of God in his patience and long sufferance towards wicked and ungodly men, ministereth many occasions and opportunities unto them, by the advantage whereof they might easily be drawn to repent, did they not willingly indulge themselves in that hardness of heart which, in the fruits of it, tends to nothing but to the treasuring up of wrath to themselves, &c. In the same construction, Christ is styled "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," John 1:29; and so to be "The propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 John 2:2; not

as if, or because the sin of the world is actually or completely taken away by him, or so, that this whole sin either is, or at any time must needs be pardoned, or actually taken away in all the fruits, consequences, or effects of it, because he is said to have taken it away; but because he hath done and suffered that which hath a glorious efficacy and tendency in it, to or towards such a taking of it away; so that if it be not actually and completely taken away, the cause of it is somewhere else to be sought, and found, as viz., in the sinners, or men themselves, and not in him. In this sense, likewise, he is said to be "The propitiation for the sins of the whole world," not because the sins of the whole world are actually, completely, or with successfulness in the event propitiated or atoned by him, but because that sacrifice of himself, which he hath offered in order to a propitiating or atoning the sins of the whole world, is so pregnant and full of a propitiatory efficacy and virtue, and withal is so propounded and held forth by God unto the whole world, that if any man's sin remains actually unpropitiated, or unpardoned, it is through his own voluntary neglect of this sacrifice, and not from any intention on God's part, that his sin should not be atoned or propitiated by this sacrifice, as well as any other man's. It were easy to multiply examples of that propriety of expression now under observation, from the Scriptures. And I desire the rather that it may be carefully minded and remembered, because I verily believe that the nonadvertency of it by men of learning and worth, with some few others of like consideration (whereof we may give notice in time) hath mainly occasioned the dividing of their thoughts and judgments from the doctrine of universal redemption. We shall be invited, I suppose, before the conclusion of this discourse, to recruit the reader's memory with a re-mention of this notion of Scripture dialect. In the meantime we clearly see by the light of it, how God may be said to establish, to confirm unto the end, to keep men from evil, though men neither be actually, nor in the event established, confirmed, or kept from evil; and this without any prejudice or disparagement in the least, either unto the grace or goodness of God, or to his power, or effectualness of working in this behalf.

The next Scripture which we shall undertake to right, against those who have done it the injury of fathering the common doctrine of perseverance upon it, is this: "They went out from us, but they were, not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with



us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us,” 1 John 2:19. From hence this inference is drawn up; that they who are of the saints, i. e. of the number of those who are real and true saints, will always continue in this number, and never apostatise. But for answer,

1. This inference presumeth many things, for which neither it, nor any the authors of it, will ever be able to give any good security of proof; as, viz. 1. That this phrase, “They were not of us,” imports that they never were true believers. This certainly can never be proved, because there is another sense, and this every whit as proper to the words, and more commodious for the context and scope of the place, which may be given of them, as we shall see anon. 2. That this expression, “They were of us,” signifies that they were true believers: of the uncertainty of this supposition, we shall give the like account. 3. That these words, “They went out from us,” signify their final desertion or abdication of the apostles’ communion, or their total and final renunciation of Christ, his church, and gospel. This supposition hath no bottom at all, or colour for it. 4. That this clause, “They would no doubt have continued with us,” signifieth they would have continued in the same faith wherein we persevere and continue. Nor is there any competent reason to enforce this sense of these words, because neither doth the grammatical tenor of them require it, and much less the scope of the passage, (of which in due time.) 5. The said inference supposeth that John certainly knew that all those who for the present remained in his communion were true believers. For if they were not true believers, they that were gone out from them, in the sense contended for, might be said to be of them, i. e. persons in the same condition with them. But how improbable this is, (I mean, that John should infallibly know that all those who as yet continued with them were true believers,) I refer to consideration. 6. The inference under contest yet further supposeth, that John certainly knew that they who were now gone out from them neither were now, nor ever before, true believers; yea, and that he certainly knew this, by their departure or going out from them. 7. And, lastly, it presumeth yet further, that all true believers do always abide in the external communion of the church; and that when men do not so abide, they plainly declare hereby, that they never were true believers: which is not only a manifest untruth, but expressly contrary to the doctrine itself of those men who assert the inference. For they teach, as

we heard before, “That even true believers may fall so foul and so far, that the church, according to the command of Christ, may be constrained to testify that she cannot tolerate them in her external communion, nor that ever they shall have any part or portion in the kingdom of Christ, unless they repent.” Doubtless to be cast out of the church, according to the institution and command of Christ, who commands no such thing, but upon very heinous and highly unchristian misdemeanors, is of every whit as sad an importance, as a voluntary desertion of the church’s communion can be, especially for a season. But,

2. Suppose these two suppositions be granted to the inference makers, 1. That this phrase, “To go out from us,” signifies voluntarily to forsake the society or communion of Christians; and 2. That this expression, “To be of us,” signifies true and inward communion with those from whom they went out, yet will not these contributions suffice for the firm building of the said inference. The reason is, because the apostle expressly saith, that “they would have continued *with us*,” not that they would have continued such as they were, in respect of the truth or essence of their faith. And if the apostle’s scope in this place were to prove or affirm, that they who are once true Christians or believers, always continue such, then when he saith, “They would have continued with us,” he must of necessity mean, either that they would have continued faithful, as we continue faithful; or else, that they would have continued always in our society, or in the profession of Christianity. But that neither of these senses are of any tolerable consistency, is evident by the light of this consideration, viz. that the apostle then must have known that the persons he speaks of, and who went out from them, neither were, nor ever had been, true Christians or believers, when they thus went from them. Now if he had this knowledge of them, it must be supposed, either that he had it by extraordinary revelation, but this is very improbable, and howsoever can never be proved; or else that he gained or obtained it by their departure, or going out from them. But that this could be no sufficient argument or ground to beget any such knowledge in the apostle concerning them, is evident from hence, because it may very easily, and doth very frequently come to pass, that they who are true Christians do not always continue in that Christian society, unto which they have once joined themselves, and adhered, no, nor yet in the external profession of Christianity itself. Yea, our opposers themselves frequently and without scruple teach and affirm, that even

true believers themselves may, either through fear or shame, or extremity of sufferings, or the like, he brought to deny Christ, and without any danger of making shipwreck of their faith, forbear a profession-making of the name of Christ afterwards. But,

3. For the true meaning of the place, it is to be considered, that the apostle's intent in the words was to prevent or heal an offence, that weak Christians might take at that doctrine, which was taught and spread abroad, by those anti-christs, or anti-christian teachers, (spoken of in the former verse, and there said to have been many,) and that especially because they had sometimes lived and conversed with the apostles themselves in Christian churches, and had professed the same faith and doctrine with them. By reason hereof some Christians, not so considerate or judicious as others, might possibly think or conceive, that surely all things were not well with the apostles, and those Christian societies with which they consorted; there was something not as it ought to have "been, either in doctrine or manners, or both, which ministered an occasion unto these men to break communion with them, and to leave them. To this the apostle answers, partly by concession, partly by exception. First by concession, in these words, "They went out from us:" which words do not so much import their utter declining or forsaking the apostles communion, (though there be an expression following which probably doth,) as the advantage or opportunity which they had to gain credit and respects both to their doctrine and persons, amongst professors of Christianity in the world, inasmuch as they came forth from the apostles themselves as men taught and commissioned by them to teach. The same phrase is used in this sense, and with the same import, Acts 15:24, where the apostles write thus to the brethren of the Gentiles: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which *went out from tis* have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying ye must be circumcised, and keep the law, to whom we gave no such " (commission, or) "commandment." So that in this clause, "they went out from us," the apostle grants, 1. That those anti-christian teachers had for a time held communion with them; and, 2. That hereby they had the greater opportunity of doing harm in the world by their false doctrine. But, 2. He answers further, by way of exception, " But they were not of us," *i. e.* whilst yet they conversed with us, they were not men of the same spirit or principles with us; we walked in the profession of the gospel with single and upright hearts, not aiming

at any secular greatness, or worldly accommodations in one kind or other: these men loved this present world, and when they found that the simplicity of the gospel would not accommodate them to their minds, they brake with us, and with the truth of the gospel itself at once. By the way, when he saith, "But they were not of us," he doth not necessarily imply, or suppose, that they never had been of them, *i. e.* sincere and single-hearted in the profession of the gospel, as they were, but only that about, and at the time of their going out from them, or perhaps some while after, they were thus tainted and corrupted. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and these lusts of other things, which choked the seed in the thorny ground, are said to have entered in, *viz.* some while after the seed was sown and sprung up, Mark 4:19. Nor is it said to have fallen among thorns, because there were thorns on the ground when it was sown, but because it fell on such a ground where it proved to be amongst thorns afterwards. Nor is it like, that Demas himself "loved this present world," when first he embraced Paul's company, with that affection, either for kind or degree, which he did afterwards. So that it cannot be proved from this clause, that the persons spoken of had never been sincere Christians, but only that they were not such when John spake these things concerning them. It follows, "For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. In these words the apostle gives a reason of his exception, telling, them to whom he writes, that this was a sign or argument that those anti-christian teachers "were not of them," in the sense declared, *viz.* "that they did not continue with them," *i. e.* they quitted their former intimacy and converse with the apostles, refused to steer the same course, to walk by the same principles any longer with them, which, saith he, questionless they would not have done had they been as sincerely affected towards Jesus Christ and the gospel as we. In which assertion John plainly vindicateth himself, and the Christian churches of his communion, from giving any just occasion of offence unto those men, whereby they should be any ways induced to forsake them ; and resolves their unworthy departure in this kind unto their own carnal and corrupt hearts, which-lusted after such fleshly accommodations and contentments, that were not to be obtained or enjoyed in a sincere profession of the gospel with the apostles, and those who were perfect in heart with them.

It follows, GREEK, *i.e.*, "but that they might be made manifest that

they are not all of us meaning, that God suffered them thus unworthily to break fellowship with us, that hereby they might all of them, one or other of those, who thus causelessly deserted us, be discovered to be men of degenerate and ignoble spirits, and not principled like unto us, the true apostles of Christ, or those that walk in uprightness of heart with us. It appertains to the just and righteous judgment of God; and withal is a dispensation of a gracious tendency and import for the honour, peace, and safety of Christian churches, and sincere Christians, that men of corrupt minds amongst them should be timely discovered.

This being the clear and undoubted scope and sense of the place, evident it is, that no inference or conclusion can be drawn from it for the countenance or establishment of the received doctrine of perseverance. All that can be made of it towards such an account as this, is, that men sincerely affected towards the Gospel, and free from that adulterous and inordinate love of this present world, which turns such multitudes aside from the way of truth, whilst they abide in this posture and frame, are seldom or never found to desert the society of faithful teachers or sound Christians ; but concerning any absolute, necessity of their continuing free, who either have been free, or are free at present, from the inordinate love of the world, here is not the least overture or intimation. Yea, the non-continuance of those false teachers with John, and the good Christians with him here spoken of, though it argues and imports a worldly and dangerous distemper in their hearts and spirits, yet doth it not necessarily or demonstratively imply a nullity of their faith.

Another text of Scripture, from whence the doctrine of perseverance claims countenance and credit, is that which speaketh thus: "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John 3:9. From hence such an argument as this is levied in defence of the said doctrine: "He that sinneth not, neither can sin, cannot fall away from his faith: Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, neither can sin. Therefore whosoever is born of God, cannot fall away from his faith."

To this I answer by distinguishing those terms, sinneth not, neither can sin, made use of in both propositions. First, by sinneth not, may he meant, committeth no act of sin, sinneth not at all. In this sense of the phrase the minor is absolutely untrue. For he that is born of God certainly sinneth in a sense, i. e. committeth acts, yea, many acts of sin. "In many

things,” saith James, “we offend all,” Jam. 3:2; meaning, even the holiest and most regenerate of all. Secondly, by sinneth not, may be meant, say some, doth not perpetrate, or commit sin with delight. But this sense I am confident cannot be justified, either from the Scripture, nor yet upon any competent ground of reason. Not to sin, doth no where in Scripture signify not to sin with delight. I acknowledge, that words and phrases are sometimes in Scripture used emphatically; in which cases, over and besides their proper significations, they consignify some peculiarity of manner, or some special circumstance relating to the thing or action expressed. But what they signify in this kind (I mean, over and besides their strict and proper signification) is not arbitrary, or left for men to make what they please, but is to be estimated by the scope of the place, and nature of the matter in hand. I easily grant, that the words under debate, sinneth not, or doth not commit sin, are emphatical in the Scripture before us. But that the emphasis lieth in any such modification, which should give them this sense, sinneth not with delight, hath no good accord with reason or with, truth. For there are many born of God who do commit sin with delight; yea, the delight or pleasure which they take in many sins committed by them, is the chief if not the only reason why they commit them. Yea, it is a question, whether any man commits any sin whatsoever without delight in one kind or other.

Thirdly, By “sinneth not” is meant, say others, sinneth not deliberately, or without inward reluctance in the act of sinning. But neither hath this sense any better bottom than conjecture, and this obnoxious enough to him that will chew and not swallow; for, 1. What necessity is there that, when John saith, “He that is born of God doth not commit sin,” he should mean committeth it not with deliberation, or premeditation, or without reluctance? Why may not his meaning as well be “doth not commit sin” unto death, or customarily, *as* other men do, or the like? 2. Certain it is, that “he that is born of God” doth, at least sometimes, “commit sin” with deliberation, yea, and, in the apostle’s expression, “makes provision for the flesh,” Rom. 13:14; i. e. plots and projects means and opportunities for the committing of it, and digests it, as it were, into method beforehand, that he may commit it the more artificially, as well as wicked men: witness David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, 2 Sam. 11.: witness the two patriarchs, Simeon and Levi, in the matter of the Shechemites, Gen. 34; besides examples in this kind which every day

almost brings forth. 3. Neither is it true that every one that is born of God sinneth always, when he doth sin, with inward reluctancy. Doubtless, David was not divided in himself, suffered no inward conflict about the committing of those sins lately intimated, considering that, according to the general opinion of our best Protestant expositors and divines, he remained for about the space of a whole year after the committing of these sins without any sense of, or remorse for, them; and if the Lord had not sent his prophet Nathan unto him to awaken him, who knows but that he might have slept in his guilt even unto death? Besides, as concerning sins quotidiani incursus, or sins of infirmity, as they are commonly called, which are incident to those that are born of God as well as unto others, the case is yet more evident, viz. that these, at least many of them, are committed by them without any such inward reluctancy as the exposition now opposed suggesteth, and particularly those of which they have no knowledge or sense when they commit them. 4, and lastly to this, Suppose it were granted that men born of God do not sin but with inward reluctancy, yet that this is not the sense wherein the apostle ascribes a non-sinning unto them is evident from hence, viz., because certain it is that the non-sinning here intended by him to be ascribed unto them is such which is appropriate to them, and not communicable to wicked or unregenerate men. But that men unregenerate sin, and that frequently, with inward reluctancy, is the frequent acknowledgment of these men themselves, and besides is of easy deduction and observation from Rom. 1:32; 2:1, 5, &c.: nor is it, nor can it reasonably be, denied by our adversaries themselves.

Fourthly, When the apostle saith that “he that is born of God doth not commit sin,” some understand it of committing sin unto death, or with final impenitency. This exposition, indeed, if it could be made to stand upright, would bear the weight of the controversy depending alone; but it argues much weakness for a man, in an exposition of Scripture, to determine for his own sense in a controversy or question, without giving a very substantial reason of such his exposition. Now, I can meet with no reason at all from the assertors of this exposition for the confirmation of it; but reasons against it there are these three at hand, and many more in coming: 1. The grammar or letter of the phrase breatheth not the least air of such a sense. 2. The phrase of “committing sin” is nowhere in Scripture found in such a sense, I mean, to sin with final impenitency or

unto death. The authors of the exposition have not yet shown it, nor, I believe, ever will. 3. Nor doth the context or scope of the place any ways invite, much less enforce, such an exposition. The intent and drift of the apostle, from ver. 3 even to the end of the chapter, as he that doth but run the context over may read, is not to show or argue whether the sons of God may possibly in time so degenerate as to live sinfully and die impenitently, but to evince this, that those who claim the great honour and privilege of being the children of God, cannot justify or make good this claim, neither unto others nor to themselves, but by a holy and Christian life and conversation. Now, it is one thing to argue or prove who are the sons of God at present, another whether they who are such at present must of necessity always so continue. The former is the apostle's theme in the context; the latter he is wholly silent unto. So, then, if by not sinning, the argument which we have now upon answer understands the non-committing of any of these four kinds of sin, or non-sinning upon any of the terms explained, the minor proposition is denied, which saith that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not nor doth the apostle John affirm it, as hath been clearly shown, in any such sense.

If, by "sinneth not," the argument meaneth, walketh not ordinarily or customarily in any known way or course of sin,—maketh not, as it were, a trade or occupation of sinning, (which we have formerly proved to be the sense of the phrase GREEK, in the Scriptures, and more particularly in the writings of this apostle, (Chap, 9.,) the said minor proposition is granted as to this clause "whosoever is born of God sinneth not." For that further clause in it, "neither can sin," this also, as to the Scripture use of the words "can" and "cannot," is very ambiguous and of doubtful signification : for, 1. A man may be said to "can," or to be able to do a thing when the thing is meet or comely for him to do; and, in opposition hereunto, when a thing is uncomely or unmeet to be done by him, it may be said of him, in Scripture phrase, that he cannot do it. "How then," saith Joseph to his mistress, "can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Gen. 39:9; which is as if he had plainly said, I cannot do it. So again, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn," saith Christ, "as long as the bridegroom is with them?" Matt. 9:15; meaning that it was an irrational or uncomely thing for them so to do; and in this respect, saith he, they cannot do it. Thus Exod. 8:26, where our English translators read, "It is not meet so to do," Jerome translated it, "Non



potest ita fieri,” i. e. it cannot so be done. Thus also the apostle Paul, (to spare other places,) “For we can do nothing against the truth,” &c., 2 Cor. 13:8; meaning that it was a most unworthy and unseemly thing for him to act in any kind against the truth or to the prejudice of the gospel; and in this respect he saith that he could not do it. See also 1 Cor. 3:1; 10:21; 12:21; Gal. 4:15; Luke 6:42; Gen. 24:50; 29:8, &c. 2. A person may be said to “can,” or to be able to do such or such a thing, when, being otherwise provided of strength sufficient, he is under a present disposition or inclination of mind and will to do it. In this sense the Lord Christ is said to “can,” or to be able to “have compassion on the ignorant,” Heb. 5:2; and, in opposition hereunto, when a man wants such a disposition, especially when a contrary disposition rules in him, it may, in Scripture language, be said of him that he cannot do it. Thus it is said of the Lord Christ himself, that, being in his own country, “he *could* there do no mighty work,” Mark 6:5; meaning that he had no disposition of mind or will hereunto, and this because of the general unbelief of the people here, as one of the evangelists accounteth, for otherwise his natural or executive power of doing mighty works, was the same here which it was in other places. So he demands of the Pharisees, “How can ye, being evil, speak good things?” Matt. 12:34; implying, that having a disposition in them contrary unto, that, by which men are inclined to speak good things, they were as men unable and wanting power to speak such things. Again, speaking to ...the same generation of men, he demands, “Why do ye not understand my speech?” and answers his own question thus: “Even because ye *cannot* hear my word John 8:43, meaning that they had a marvellous averse disposition as to the hearing or minding of it; which he plainly signifieth in the words immediately following:

“Ye are of your father the devil,” &c., i. e. you are of a devilish disposition, enemies unto God and goodness; and this renders you unable to hear, i. e. duly to mind and consider my words. This signification of the word “cannot,” is most frequent in Scripture. See further upon this account, Gen. 37:4; Rev. 2:2; Matt. 20:22; Mark 9:39; Luke 11:7, 14, 20, *See*. Thirdly, the word “cannot” sometimes notes only the difficulty of a thing to be performed. In this sense our Saviour, approving that saying of his disciples, “It is good not to marry,” saith thus, “All men *cannot* receive this saying,” &c., Matt. 19:11 ; meaning that it was very difficult for some men to acknowledge the goodness of that saying in reference to

themselves, or to refrain marrying. For that it was not, or is not, simply impossible for any man in this sense to receive the said saying, or to judge the forbearance of marriage good for him, and to forbear accordingly, is self-evident; and besides, may be inferred from these words of our Saviour following: "And there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, (*i. e.* whose heart serves him to encounter and engage against the difficulty, and shall overcome it,) let him receive it;" *i. e.* let him forbear to marry. For concerning those of whom he saith, "That they have made themselves eunuchs for," &c., evident it is, that he meaneth not by them either such, who by nature are indisposed to marriage, nor such upon whom an incapacity in this kind hath been forced (for of these he had spoken plainly in the former part of the verse;) but of such who had overruled and vanquished their inclinations and desires that way, by the weight and great import of spiritual considerations, proper to obtain a conquest of that nature. In this sense also, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, saith concerning the prophet Amos, "that the land is not able to (or cannot) bear all his words," Amos 7:10; *i. e.* can hardly bear them without falling foul upon him because of them. So when our Saviour saith: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid," Matt. 5:14, he doth not import an absolute impossibility of the hiding of it, for doubtless there may be means found out to hide a city so situate as well as another standing in a valley, but only a difficulty thereof. See also Gen. 32:12; Gen. 45:1; Exod. 7:21, 24. Fourthly, the word or phrase we speak of, "cannot," sometimes imports only a present incapacity in a person for the doing of a thing when there is a remote principle or power in him notwithstanding to do it. Thus God himself saith to his prophet Ezekiel, "Thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech or of an hard language, whose words thou *canst not* understand," Ezek. 3:6, implying that there were some people whose words he could not understand, *viz.* de praesenti, for the present; not but that there was a principle of reason and understanding in him, by the improvement whereof accordingly he might come in time to be very able to understand them. Thus it is said of the Egyptian magicians, "that they *could not stand* before Moses, (*viz.* at present) because of the boils," Exod. 9:11; but, these notwithstanding, they were in a capacity of standing before him another time, as, *viz.* when they should be healed of their boils. Thus it is said, "That the children of Israel *could not stand*

before their enemies,” Judg. 7:12, viz. whilst Achan’s sin was unpunished amongst them ; yet were they remotely capable not only of standing before their enemies, but of vanquishing, yea, and making their enemies fly before them. Fifthly, and lastly, The phrase “cannot,” frequently importeth an absolute impotency or incapacity in persons in reference to the doing of such or such a thing. Thus our Saviour, speaking of his sheep, “No man (or none) *can* take them out of my hand,” John 10:29; *i. e.* either hath, or ever shall have any such power whereby to take them out of my hand. And so Gamaliel to his fellows: “But if this counsel or work be of God, ye *cannot* overthrow it, &c.” Acts 5:39, *i. e.* you are in no capacity at all, either present or remote, to overthrow it. It were easy to multiply instances of this signification.

Now if the clause, “cannot sin,” in the argument propounded, be understood according to any of the four first significations mentioned of the word cannot, both the propositions are false; if according to the fifth and last, the major is true, hut the minor false. The major proposition was this: “He that sinneth not, *neither can sin*, cannot fall away from his faith.” 1. If by the denial of a power to sin in this proposition, which that clause, “neither can sin,” importeth, he meant nothing else but an unmeetness or uncomeliness for a man to sin, it is a clear case that he that cannot sin may, notwithstanding such a want of power to sin, very possibly fall away from his faith.” For thousands may do, yea, and do, things very unmeet and uncomely to be done by them. 2. If by a denial of the said power in the proposition, be meant a present indisposition or incapacity in a man to sin by reason of the contrary disposition of holiness prevailing in him, in this sense also, he that cannot sin may very possibly fall away from his faith. For he, in whom a disposition of holiness is predominant at present, may very possibly by degrees, and through a frequency and custom of contrary actions, (if not by an impetuous and sudden turn also of heart within him,) divest himself of that honourable habit, and put on the vile garments of looseness and profaneness in the stead. 3. If by “cannot sin,” the argument meaneth can hardly sin, or cannot sin without difficulty, which was the third signification of the word cannot, neither will this sense give any colour of truth to the said proposition. For he that can hardly sin, or not sin without difficulty, may yet possibly sin; and consequently, such an inability to sin notwithstanding, fall away from his faith. 4. If by “cannot

sin,” the argument imports only a present incapacity of sinning in the person, not excluding a remote capacity in him hereunto, and such is, may in time, by means suitable, be reduced into act, evident it is, that the person, this inability to sin notwithstanding, may possibly fall away from his faith.

Again, 2. According to all these significations and importances of the clause “cannot sin,” in the said syllogism, the other proposition also is false, which saith, that “whosoever is born of God sinneth not, neither *can sin*.” For, 1. He that is born of God may very possibly do that which is uncomely and unmeet for him to do. 2. May be able to do that by the supervening or contracting of another habit upon him, which, by reason of a contrary habit prevailing upon him for a time, he cannot do. 3. He may possibly do that which only is hard or difficult for him to do. 4, and lastly, He may have a remote capacity in him of doing that in the future, and in time, and consequently may do it, which at present he is under an inability to do. Therefore it is a clear case, that there are four several significations of the word cannot, and these frequent In Scripture, wherein both the propositions, in the argument now under canvass, are false.

If the said argument understands the phrase, “cannot sin, according to the fifth and last import mentioned of the word cannot, wherein it sounds an utter and absolute incapacity or impossibility, though in this sense the major proposition be granted, viz. that he that doth not sin, nor can sin, cannot fall away from his faith, yet the minor is tardy, which saith, as we lately heard, “whosoever is born of God sinneth not, neither can sin.” For he that is born of God, is in no such incapacity of sinning, of sinning I mean in the sense formerly asserted to the Scripture in hand, which amounts to an absolute impossibility for him so to sin. But because this seems to be the sense intended in the argument, and the minor proposition, in this sense, to be built upon the Scripture in hand, let us consider whether the reason which this Scripture assigns for the said assertion, “ whosoever is born of God cannot sin,” doth necessarily enforce such a sense thereof. The tenor of the whole verse is this, “Whosoever is horn of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” Here are two propositions or assertions laid down, and a reason given of either of them respectively. The former proposition is this “Whosoever is born of God

doth not commit sin." The reason hereof is, "for his seed remaineth in him." The latter proposition this, "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin." The reason hereof is, "because he is born of God." The sense and difference of the two propositions, according to what we have argued about the place hitherto, and what we judge is this, GREEK, &c. every one that hath been bom of God sinneth not, *i. e.* whosoever hath by the word and Spirit of God been made partaker of the divine nature, so as to resemble God in the frame and constitution of his heart and soul, doth not under such a frame or change of heart as this make a trade or practice of sinning, or walk in any course of inordinateness in the world; yea, saith he, in the latter proposition, every such person doth not only or simply refrain sinning in such a sense, but he cannot sin, *i. e.* he hath a strong and potent disposition in him which carrieth him another way; or he hath a strong antipathy or averseness of heart and soul against all sin, especially against all such kind of sinning. Now the reason, saith the apostle, why such, a person committeth not sin, in the sense explained, is because his seed, the seed of God, by or of which he was born of him, GREEK, remaineth in him, *i. e.* according to the frequent signification of the word GREEK, to abide or remain, in the writings of this apostle, is or hath an actual and present being or residence in him. And that in this place it doth not signify any perpetual remaining or abiding, no nor any abiding with relation to the future is evident; because the abiding of the seed here spoken of, is given as the reason why he that is born of God doth not commit sin, *i. e.* doth not at present walk in any course of known sin. Now nothing in respect of any future permanency, or continuance of being, can be looked upon as a cause of any present effect, but only in respect of the present being or residence of it. The reason why the soul moves and acts the body to-day, is not because it will move or act it to-morrow, or because it is in the body to-day upon such terms, that it will be in it to-morrow also; much less because it is an immortal substance or the like, but simply because it is now, or this day, in the body. So the reason why the angels at this day do the will of God, is not because they have such a principle of holiness or obedience vested in them which they cannot put off or lose to eternity, but because they have such a principle as we speak of, of holiness and obedience, residing in them at the present. Therefore, when John assigns the remaining of the seed of God in him that is born of him, for the reason why he doth not commit sin, certain it

is, that by this remaining of the seed he means nothing else but the present residence or abode thereof in this person. And if his intent had been, either to assert or imply a perpetual residence of this seed in him that is born of God, it had been much more proper for him to have reserved it for a reason of the latter proposition, viz. why he that is born of God cannot sin, especially according to their sense, who by “cannot sin,” understand “can never sin,” than to subjoin it as a reason of the former. For though the future continuance of a thing in being can be no reason, as hath been said, of a present effect, yet may it well be a ground or reason of the continuance of a present effect.

Now that the word GREEK, to remain or abide, frequently signifieth, especially in the writings of this apostle, only a present residence or being; whether of a person or thing, without any reference unto or implication of a future, appears by many instances. “But ye know him,” saith our Saviour to his disciples, speaking of the Spirit, GREEK, *i. e.* “because he remaineth (or abideth) with you, and shall be in you.” Here the latter clause, “and shall be in you,” will be found a mere tautology, if the other phrase “abiding with them” imports a perpetual residence or in-being. In the same chapter, verse 25, where the original hath it, GREEK, *i. e.* remaining or abiding with you; our English translation renders it, “being yet *present* with you.” So where the apostle saith, “That he that loveth not his brother GREEK, abideth in death, 1 John 3:14; the meaning is, that such a man is in an estate of death or condemnation, not that he will, much less of necessity must, abide for any space of time after, least of all for ever, in that estate. For then it would follow, that whoever at any time did not truly love his brother, never after became a child of God. Which saying, how insupportable it is to the greatest part of those who say they believe, yea, and do believe indeed, any man’s first thoughts may sufficiently determine. It is familiar with John, saith a late writer from Cameron and Hugo Grotius, to use the word GREEK, which properly signifieth to remain, for the verb substantive to be.

Besides, that in the place in hand, it must needs signify only a present abode or being, not a future or perpetual, is evident from hence, because such a signification of it would render a sense altogether inconsistent with the plain scope of the apostle in the context, which is to exhort Christians unto righteousness and love of the brethren. Now, it is contrary to all reason, yea, to common sense itself, to signify unto those

whom we admonish, exhort, and persuade to any duty, any such thing which imports an absolute certainty or necessity of their doing it, whether they take care, or use any means for the doing it or no. And a clear case it is, that the certainty of a perpetual remaining of the seed of God in those that are born of him, imports a like certainty of their perpetual performance of the duties whereunto they exhorted.

If it be here objected and said, Yea, but the seed of which those that are born of God are begotten, is said to be an immortal or “ incorruptible seed,” 1 Pet. 1:23, and therefore cannot perish or decay in those who are begotten of it, or in whom it ever takes place, I answer,

1. That seed which the Holy Ghost affirms to be, not corruptible, hut incorruptible, is expressly said to be “ the word of God,” 1 Pet. 1:23. Now, certain it is that the word of God is not, therefore, said to be immortal or incorruptible, because it cannot be lost by those who once receive it, or in whose heart it hath been once sown, but partly because it is, in the nature and essence of it, incorruptible ; in respect whereof, though all the world, who are now partakers of it, should reject and cast it out of their hearts, so that it were no where to be found under heaven, yet it would be, in the nature and essence of it, every way the same, and suffer no alteration or change hereby at all; partly, also, because it is endued with such an excellent virtue or property, that it is able to derive and confer immortality and incorruption upon those who are begotten of it; yea, and will actually derive and confer these glorious privileges upon them, if they suffer not the spirit of this heavenly birth to be extinguished and quenched in them before the season of the actual collation thereof comes: for, as that seed which is corruptible is not therefore termed corruptible, because it may be transferred or removed from the subject or soil wherein it remains at present, but because, according to the nature and elementary constitution of it, it may be corrupted, and suffer a change of being; as also, because it is naturally apt to produce and yield such bodies or things, which, according to the course of nature, are corruptible likewise ; in like manner, the seed of the word of God is not therefore said to be an incorruptible seed, because it cannot be taken from or forsaken by those in whom it hath a residence for the present ; but because, whether it be taken or not taken from, whether it be forsaken or not forsaken by these, it retains its proper nature, which is, to be incorruptible ; for it is merely extrinsical and accidental to the word of

God to be either embraced or refused, to be either retained, or let go, or lost by men; nor do any of these things make the least alteration in the nature of it, no more than the taking up or removing a corn of wheat, or of any other corruptible grain, from the ground or field wherein at present it resteth, or the letting of it there alone, altereth the nature or essential properties thereof. But,

2. It may be some question, whether by the seed of God in the Scripture in hand, said to remain in him that is born of him, be meant precisely the word of God, and not rather that which the Scripture elsewhere calls “ the divine nature,” which is the proper effect of the word of God, according to that of Peter ; “ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature,” &c. 2 Pet. 1:4; together with that of the apostle James, “ Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,” &c. James 1:18. If you ask me, what this divine nature is, I answer, it is a certain heavenly impression made by the gospel in or upon the heart or soul of a man; or a divine principle, quality, or disposition, wrought in him by the word of God, by which he resembles God himself, and is effectually inclined to walk and act according to those principles of righteousness and holiness, in all things appertaining unto him to do, by which God himself walketh and acteth in the world. If you ask me further, But why do I conceive that by the seed of God, in the Scripture in hand, the apostle should mean such an impression or disposition as this; I answer, Because some such thing must of necessity be meant by it, which is very spiritfult, vigorous, and active in turning the heart and soul of a man against sin. First, the metaphorical expression of seed importeth as much; I mean, somewhat that is very spirituous, full of vigour, power, and efficacy, in the kind of it. Natural philosophy and experience jointly teach that it is the nature of seed to be full of spirits, and thereby exceedingly vigorous and operative. Secondly, the effect here ascribed to it, the keeping or preserving of the man it whom it remains from sinning, which requires a principle of very great strength and power to effect, implieth the same. Now, such a principle, genius, or quality in a man as the Holy Ghost calls the divine nature, may well be conceived to be very spiritfult, and vigorously operative, according to the kind and tendency of it, in which respect it is frequently termed spirit; and consequently, to be sufficiently active and powerful to preserve its subject from sinning. Yea, our apostle, in assigning the reason of his latter



assertion in this place, which is, that “he that is born of God cannot sin,” the reason whereof he allegeth to be this, “because he is born of God,” supposeth the seed here spoken of, whatsoever is meant by it, to be so actuous and powerful, that it doth not only actually and *de facto* preserve him in whom it remains from sinning, but also renders him impotent or unable to sin. For this reason, “because he is born of God,” is the same in effect and for substance with that of the former assertion, “for his seed abideth in him;” only it doth somewhat more emphatically import, that the reason why the seed of God remaining in a man is so potently exclusive of sin in the same subject with it, is the absolute holiness, or most perfect hatred of sin, which is in God himself, of whom the person is begotten again by such his seed. As the reason why a lion hath courage, strength, and other like leonine properties, is because he came of a lion, a creature naturally endued with the same properties. But whatsoever is here meant by the seed of God, whether the word of God or the divine nature, so notioned as hath been described, evident it is, by what hath been argued, that no inseparableness of it from the present subject, nor consequently any impossibility of falling away from faith, can be inferred from any thing spoken of it, as attributed to it in this place.

There is only one objection more, as far as I am able to apprehend, that lieth with any seemingness of strength against the premises. The tenor hereof is this : If the seed of God, whatever it be, remaining in a man regenerate, worketh in him the greatest and strongest antipathy against, or alienation and abhorrency of mind and affection from sin, that can lightly be imagined, which hath been granted all along in the traverse of the Scripture in hand, how is it possible that such a man should fall away, especially totally and finally, from his faith ? It is no ways reasonable to suppose, that it is possible for a man so to fall away from his faith without sinning, no, nor yet without sinning very grievously; nor is it much more reasonable, if not as unreasonable altogether, to suppose that a man may sin, and that grievously, who hath the greatest and strongest antipathy against sin, the deepest alienation and abhorrency of mind and will from sin, that lightly can be conceived; therefore, how is it possible for him that cannot sin, even in this sense, to fall away totally or finally ? I answer,

He that hath the greatest and strongest antipathy against sin that flesh and blood is capable of, yet retains that essential character or property of a creature, mutability, which supposeth apossibility, at least, of sinning; if

not in sensu composito, *i. e.* whilst such an antipathy remains in its full vigour and strength, yet in sensu diviso, *i.e.* in case or when this antipathy shall abate and decline. As, though water made hot to the highest degree of heat whereof the nature of it is capable, cannot possibly cool any thing whilst it remains under such a degree of heat, yet this hinders not but that it may in time, its present heat notwithstanding, return to its natural coldness, and then cool other things: in like manner, a man may, by the spirit of grace and regeneration, be carried up to a very effectual and potent antipathy of mind and will against sin, by means whereof he is in no capacity or possibility of sinning, in the sense formerly declared, whilst it continues thus effectual and potent ; but the present effectualness or potency of it, in a subject that is mutable, and successively capable of both contraries, is no sufficient argument to prove that therefore it must needs always continue effectual or potent in the same degree: and if it may abate or fall one degree, why not another ? and if two, why not all, considering that all and every degree hereof is but of one and the same nature?

If it be here said, Yea, but such a strong antipathy against sin as you suppose and grant in regenerate men, is inconsistent with any such abatement or declining, and cannot reasonably be looked upon as capable of any falling, sinking, or losing so much as one degree of its strength, inasmuch as such a falling or losing as this cannot be without sin ; and till there be such a declining as this in that holy principle we speak of, the person is supposed to be full of the hatred and abomination of sin. Therefore, unless he shall be supposed capable of sinning even in sensu composito, *i. e.* whilst he is yet under the greatest and most perfect hatred and abhorrency of sin, (which seems to be *dura suppositio*, and to need good proof) he must be supposed incapable of any declining at all in such his principle, and consequently much more incapable of falling away, either totally or finally. To this I answer,

1. That according to the known sense and principles of our adversaries themselves in the cause depending, faith in men regenerate, or the grace of regeneration itself, to what degree or perfection soever raised or advanced in the subject, may, notwithstanding, very possibly decay or decline, though not totally, or in all the parts or degrees of it, yet in some, yea, in many; yea, so far, that in appearance it may seem utterly and totally lost. If so, then every particular grace in such a person may possibly abate in the strength, and fall from the height of it; and

consequently, that antipathy or hatred against sin, which is in him, how perfect soever it be, may lose ground also, and abate of its perfection. Therefore,

2. When we suppose or grant a strong antipathy against sin in those that are born of God, we do not suppose withal, either this antipathy to be unimpairable, or any such principle, which cannot decline in the strength and power of it; or that it can be impaired or decline without sin in him who suffers an impairment of it to be made in him. When we suppose the greatest antipathy against sin in a man that flesh and blood is lightly capable of, we do not hereby suppose him without the reach of temptation, or a man not subject to incogitancies, forgetfulness, and other human frailties. We may very well, and ought to, suppose Solomon to have been the wisest of men, and yet suppose him withal, even in the height and excellency of his wisdom, to have been a man capable, or under a possibility, of doing weakly or foolishly. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit*. There is no acquired habit or created principle whatsoever seated in the heart or soul of a man, that doth at any time act him or cause him to act congruously to it without the actual intention of the mind upon, and the like concurrence of the will with, the action. Again, 2. Most certain it is, that the mind of a man, being a finite faculty, cannot intend plurality of objects, actions, or occasions at once, or at one and the same time.

3. As certain it is as either of the former, that neither the mind nor will of a man are compelled or necessitated by any habit, inclination, or disposition whatsoever, always, or indeed at any time, to intend them or their motions and actings, or to concur with them herein; but are in some degree, at least, of liberty and power to turn aside from them to several other objects and occasions as they please. It is true, habits and inclinations, especially when they are much grown and rooted in the soul by frequent and long-continued actions, have a great power over men to entice and draw them into a frequent repetition of the same kind of action by which they were first introduced, and whereunto they have so long prevailed with such men to accustom themselves; and in respect of this power it is that the Scripture so frequently ascribes a kind of moral impotency unto men to act contrary to the tenor of such actions whereunto they have much accustomed themselves, yea, or to suspend or forbear them upon opportunities; and, upon the same account, represents persons as servants, as in subjection and bondage to those

respective kinds of actions or courses whereunto they have voluntarily inured themselves for any considerable time.

Of this notion are such passages and sayings as these: “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin,” *i. e.*, frequently and customarily, as we formerly interpreted the import of the phrase in the writings of the apostle John, chap, 9., “is the servant of sin,” John 8:34. So again, “ Know ye not that to whomsoever ye give yourselves as servants to obey, his *servants* ye are whom ye obey, whether it be,” &c., Rom. 6:16. So also, “*Can* the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil,” Jer. 13:23. Of like consideration is that also of our Saviour, “ A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit: neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,” Matt. 7:18; to omit many others. But, 4, and lastly, When the Scripture supposeth or asserts a moral impotency in men, as in the passages now cited, with their fellows, either wholly to cease from their long-accustomed actions, or to act contrary to them, it neither supposeth nor asserts a natural, simple, or absolute impotency in respect of either: for it is the nature, property, and condition of all habits or created principles in men whatsoever, by discontinuance or long suspension of their appropriate actions, to languish and abate of their wonted strength and vigour, and in time wholly to expire. So then, it remaining still in the power of the mind and will of a man, even under the greatest captivity or subjection unto any habit, disposition, or principle whatsoever, whether sinful or holy, to suspend and discontinue, as hath been proved, their proper actings respectively by denying or withholding their concurrence with them in order towards such actions, evident it is that they have power, and may shake and weaken every such habit, disposition, or principle in themselves to what degree they desire, yea, and in time wholly enervate, dissipate, and expel them: therefore it is ‘no *dura suppositio*’, no hard supposition, to suppose that a person invested with the strongest antipathy against sin whereof he is capable, especially in the state and condition of morality, may, notwithstanding, even in *sensu composito*, *i. e.* this antipathy standing, either do that which is sinful, but especially omit or neglect the doing of that which is his duty, yea, and of great concernment likewise unto him to do.

Thus we have at last fully and clearly, we suppose, acquitted that Scripture, 1 John 3:9, more vehemently suspected and charged than all

his fellows with confederacy against that doctrine which affirms a possibility of a total and final defection in the saints. Another Scripture hath the same imputation cast upon it for speaking only thus: "My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to take them out of my Father's hand," John 10:29. From hence it is argued and conceived, that God engageth himself with his omnipotency to preserve the saints, or sheep of Christ, from either total or final apostasy, and consequently that it is impossible but that they should be preserved.

But to this place of Scripture a sufficient answer hath been given already in this chapter; where we showed, that the engagement of the mighty power of God for the protection and safeguarding of the saints, as such, or remaining such, against all adverse power whatsoever, is frequently asserted in Scripture, but no where for the compelling or necessitating of them to persevere or continue such. Nor is there the least intimation of any such thing in the text before us. And yet here I shall further add in reference unto it,

That by the tenor and carriage of the context it appears, 1, That that security for which our Saviour engageth the greatness of his Father's power unto his sheep, is promised or ascertained unto them, not in order to the effecting or procuring their final perseverance, but rather by way of reward to it. 2. That this promise of eternal safety made by Christ unto his sheep, doth not relate to their estate or condition in this present world, but to that of the world to come. "My sheep," saith he, ver. 27, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." In which expressions of "hearing his voice," and "following him," he intimates or includes their perseverance, as appears by the words immediately following, ver. 28, "And I give unto them eternal life." This gift of his presupposeth the final perseverance of those to whom it is given. It follows, "and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." In these words he seems further to explain how and in what sense he calls that "life eternal" which he promiseth to confer upon them, as, viz. that by the eternalness of it, he doth not only mean such a constitution or condition of it which secureth it from perishing or dissolving, in respect or by means of any intrinsical cause, upon which account the lives they live in the flesh are perishable, but which secureth it likewise against all external means or power that may seem to threaten or endanger it. And for a further confirmation that the life which he

promiseth unto his sheep, hearing his voice and following him, (viz. as was said, perseveringly,) is eternal, in the best, largest, most comprehensive, most desirable sense of the word, he subjoins the words in hand, ver. 29, “ My Father which gave them me is greater,” viz. in power, “than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand;” as if he should have said, God himself, by whose grace they became my sheep and followed me, and whose power is abundantly sufficient for the work, will maintain and make good unto them to the uttermost that life which I shall give unto them, against all dangers, all enemies, all adversary powers whatsoever. This being the natural and clear disposition of the context, it is a plain case that here is not the least air or breathing of any engagement of the great power of God to bring about the perseverance of the saints upon those terms of infallibility or necessity which are so much contended for.

Another Scripture much entreated in the behalf of the doctrine of perseverance, is that of the evangelist John, concerning our Saviour : “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,” John 13:1. Out of this light some draw this darkness: Therefore, whom Christ once loves, he loves always, or unto the end. Which inference, they suppose, is further strengthened by that of the prophet: “For I am the Lord; I change not,” Mal. 3:6. I answer,

1. From the passage in John there can nothing more be concluded, in reference to the question in hand, than, by way of immediate deduction, the greatness and constancy of Christ's love towards such of his disciples who continued in their obedience and faithfulness unto him; for the evangelist, I suppose, did not intend Judas amongst those whom Christ loved unto the end; and, 2, by way of proportion, or rational consequence from this deduction, that the love of Christ is great and constant towards all those who persevere in love and faithfulness unto him. This, is the constant doctrine of the Scriptures, but no ways concerns the present dispute. Yet for the passage itself, if it hath any aspect at all upon it, it is rather by way of favour and countenance to that side against which, than to that for which, it is commonly alleged. For if the love of Christ towards his disciples unto the end, necessarily supposeth or requireth the concurrent continuance of the same affection in them towards him, it plainly follows, that if men shall draw back from him, his soul will have no further pleasure or delight in them. And this indeed was the express

doctrine of that man of God, who was sent to meet king Asa, and the people with him, upon the late presence of God with them against their enemies: “O Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, hear ye me: the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will *be found* of you; but *if ye forsake him*, he will forsake you.” 2 Chron. 15:2. Which clearly supposeth, 1, a possibility of their forsaking God, who for a time axe truly and really with him; 2, a certainty of God’s forsaking those who forsake him.

2. It is not here said, that Christ, “having loved his own, loved them unto the end” of their lives, or days, but “to the end,” viz. of his life and abode in the world; the emphatical and clear meaning of the place being thus, that to declare the exceeding greatness and marvellous constancy of his affection towards his disciples, and that whilst they were yet in the world, (and so subject to many weaknesses and infirmities, which might seem to render them less lovely unto him than those that were “made perfect,” Heb. 12:23, as the apostle speaks, through death,) he did not cease to manifest his care and love towards them, no not at such a time or season wherein the most affectionate and tender parents are wont to forget and lay aside the care and thoughts of their dearest children, as, viz. when he knew and was very sensible of a most hideous and grievous storm and tempest of death hanging over his head, and even now ready to fall upon him. At such a time as this he expressed his love to them, and care over them, as appeareth partly by that condescentious action of his in washing their feet, which immediately followeth in this chapter; partly by that large and serious discourse which he had with them, and made unto them, in the three following chapters; partly also by that most affectionate and heavenly prayer for them, wherein he recommended them unto his Father’s love and care, chap. 17. But that by the “end” unto which he is said to have “loved” his disciples, is not meant the end of their lives, but of his own, is the common sense of expositors. “He loved them even to the death which he suffered for them,” say our English divines in their annotations upon the place; and so incessantly Calvin likewise, not to mention any more, plainly enough intimates the same sense. “Nor is it doubtful,” saith he upon the place, “but that even now he bears the same affection which he retained in the very instant of death.” So that in this passage of Scripture there is neither colour nor shadow of any thing for the final perseverance of the saints, but only for the perseverance of

Christ's love towards them whilst they persevere, which indeed may be substantially proved from hence, if it were any part of the question.

3. For the words of Malachi, "I am the Lord, I change not; from which it was wont to be argued, that when God once loves a person, he never ceaseth to love him, because this must needs argue a changeableness in him, in respect of his affection; and, consequently, that the saints cannot fall away finally from his grace; I answer,

1. By the tenor of this arguing it would as well follow, that in case God should at any time withdraw his love or favour from a nation, or body of people, which he sometimes favoured or loved, he should be changed. But that no such change of dispensation as this towards one and the same people or nation, argueth any change at all in God, at least any such change which he disclaimeth as incompetent to him, is evident from those instances, without number, recorded in Scripture, of such a different dispensation of his towards sundry nations, and more especially towards the Jews, to whom sometimes he gave peace, sometimes he consumed them with wars, stirring up enemies against them; sometimes he gave them plenty, other while he exercised them with famine, and scarcity of all things: sometimes he made them the head, and sometimes again the tail of the nations round about them. Therefore, neither the changeableness nor unchangeableness of God are to be estimated or measured, either by any variety or uniformity of dispensation towards one and the same object; and, consequently, for him to express himself, as this day, towards a person, man, or woman, as if he intended to save them, or that he really intends to save them, and should on the morrow, as the alteration in the interim may be, or however may be supposed in these persons, express himself to the contrary, as that he verily intends to destroy them, would not argue or imply the least change or alteration in him. Yea, when as in one hour he conferred upon the lapsed angels the greatest happiness they were capable of, and in the next hour, perhaps sooner, their sin intervening, he cast them out of his sight into the greatest misery, this argued no change, or shadow of change or turning in God. Therefore,

2. That unchangeableness which the Scriptures, or God himself in the Scriptures asserts unto himself, is to be considered only in respect of his essence, attributes, and decrees, and not in respect of any constancy, or sameness of tenor in his dispensations towards the same creatures,



whether they be changed or no. First, God is unchangeable in his essence or simple being: in respect of this nothing can be added to him, nothing can be taken from him, nothing can be altered or made otherwise, with him, in him, or about him, than now it is or was from eternity. This unchangeableness in him the prophet David contemplated, in this his address to him: "Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hand. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," Psal. 102:25, &c. Secondly, God is unchangeable, likewise, in respect of his attributes, which are all founded in his nature, essence, or simple being; so that, for example, he is not more wise at one time and less wise at another, nor stronger at one time and weaker at another, nor better at one time and worse at another ; though it is true, he may show more wisdom, or, to speak more properly, he may show his wisdom more, *i. e.* more plainly and perspicuously, as unto men, in one contrivance or providential dispensation than in another; and in this sense he may show more power, and so more goodness, at one time than at another. Yet this different expression of himself, according to the different natures and imports of his attributes respectively, doth not argue any changeableness at all in these attributes. As a man may be as strong, when he acts little or nothing with his strength, as when in any action he exerts or puts forth the uttermost of it: and so may be of as loving and sweet a disposition, when, according to the exigency of his calling and conscience, he most severely punisheth the same persons, for their misdemeanors, whom he sometimes honoured and loved, whilst he judged them virtuous, as he was whilst he yet honoured and loved them. When a judge, who is of a sweet nature and loving disposition towards all men, considered as men, especially as good men, shall, according to the laws whereunto he is sworn, and the equity of the case, award a sentence of death against one or more of them, this no ways argueth or supposeth any alteration or change in his goodness or sweetness of disposition; he may be, nay it is like he is, the same man, in respect of these lovely qualifications or endowments, even when and whilst he executes such a judiciary act of severity, which he was before ; yea, and may still love the persons of these men whom he hath condemned to die, considered as men, as much as he did before their

delinquency. In like manner, in case God shall destroy with eternal death such men or women, whom he sometimes truly loved and respected dearly, this doth not necessarily argue the least change or alteration in any attribute of his whatsoever, as either love, goodness, mercy, &c. viz. in case these persons, having been formerly faithful and obedient unto him, have since apostatised, and died impenitently. Nay, if God should not destroy such persons in such cases, or upon such a supposition, it would argue a manifest change in some of his attributes, as severity, hatred of sin, truth, &c., yea, haply, if the matter be narrowly considered, even in his love or goodness itself. For if we judge it any part or property of the love or goodness of God towards goodness and good men, to put so great and gracious a difference between them, and between wickedness and wicked men, as to reward the former with eternal glory, the latter with eternal shame and misery, and that he hath at any time expressed his love and goodness in this kind, evident it is, that in case he should at any time not punish persevering apostates, which are the wickedest of men, with eternal death, it would argue an alteration or change in those attributes of his we speak of. Therefore, to reason thus, if God should love a man to-day, and hate him to-morrow, it would argue a strange inconstancy or mutability in God, or in his love, is a very inconsiderate and weak reasoning; for the constancy or unchangeableness of the love of God doth not stand in his constantly loving the same person or object, materially considered, but only as considered formally, *i. e.* as remaining the same morally, or in loveliness, which it was when he first loved it. Julian the professor, and Julian the apostate, are the same person or object, materially considered; but in a formal consideration they are two, and these very different. In like manner the angels, in the integrity of their creation, and in the guilt of their transgression, are one and the same object, materially considered, but formally they differ as much as light and darkness ; and to argue, that unless God should always love the same persons, materially considered, whom he once or at any time loved, he should be mutable in his love, necessarily supposeth either that God hated the lapsed angels whilst they were yet holy, and in the glory and beauty of their creation, or else that he now loves them in their apostasy. The truth is, that should God always love the same person or persons, though morally distinguished from themselves, and of righteous become wicked and abominable, this would clearly argue a mutability in his

affection, as it would in the affection of such a man, who should love good men as good men, or good men only, to-day, and wicked men to-morrow; so that men who were sometimes loved by God may now be hated of him, without any the least change or alteration in him, or in his affection, only by means of a change and alteration in themselves. The third and last particular wherein the unchangeableness of God is to be considered, are his decrees. These, truly stated and understood, are all absolute and unchangeable, shall and will take place and be fulfilled, against all contradictions and oppositions whatsoever. But of this formerly, Chap. 3. And that unchangeableness assumed by God himself unto himself, in the words in hand, "I am the Lord, I change not," is, I conceive, that which is found in him in respect of his decrees. The reason is, because it is assigned by him as the reason why they were not utterly destroyed. "I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." In the beginning of the chapter he had declared unto him his purpose and decree of sending his only begotten Son, whom he there calls "the Messenger of the Covenant," unto them. He predicteth, verses 3, 4, the happy fruits or consequences of that his sending, in reference to their nation and posterity. To the unchangeableness of this his decree he assigns that patience which he had for a long time exercised towards them, under their great and continued provocations; whereby he implies, that if he could have been turned out of the way of his decree concerning the sending of his Son unto them in their posterity, they would have done it by the greatness of their sins; but, inasmuch as this his decree, or himself in this his decree, was unchangeable, and yet must have been changed in case they had been all destroyed, for the decree was for the sending him to their nation and posterity, hence, saith he, it comes to pass that, though your sins otherwise abundantly have deserved it, yet I have spared you from a total ruin. Therefore, in these two Scriptures last argued, there is every whit as much, or rather more, against than for the common doctrine of perseverance.

Another parcel of Scripture sought out for the service of this doctrine is that which riseth in these words; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren. Moreover, whom he did

predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified,” Rom. 8:28—30. From this contexture of Scripture it is frequently argued to this effect, that when men once love God, and are effectually called, *i.e.* are regenerate and do believe, they are fastened to one end, as it were, of a certain chain, consisting of several decrees of God, like so many links indissolvably fastened one unto another, and hereby are infallibly and irresistibly drawn unto glory, and, consequently, cannot fall away or perish finally. To all this I answer,

1. That, inasmuch as this passage of Scripture is impressed also for the service of the doctrine of absolute personal election, we shall reserve the further consideration of it till our method hath carried us on to that subject, and for the present examine it only in relation to the point in hand; therefore,

Whereas it is argued from this place, that persons once regenerate are infallibly drawn and carried on to glory by a series or chain of divine acts or decrees, uninterruptedly succeeding or taking hold of one another, I answer,

That no such conclusion as this can reasonably be drawn out of these words; for the scope of the apostle in this passage is clearly this, as that ratiocinative particle, “for,” in the beginning of verse 29, plainly sheweth, to prove and make good that assertion of his, verse 28, *viz.*, that “all things work together for good to those that love God.” To prove this, he shows by what method, steps, and, as it were, degrees of dispensation or transaction, God will bring it to pass. “Whom he foreknows,” saith he, *i. e.* pre-approves (the word, knowledge, frequently in Scripture importing approbation,) as he must needs do those that love him, these he “predestinates to be conformed to the image of his Son and therefore, as all things, even his deepest sufferings, wrought together for good unto him, so must they needs do unto those who are predestinated or pre-ordinated by God to a conformity with him. To give you yet, saith our apostle, a further and more particular account how God, in the secret of his councils, hath belayed things, in order to the bringing of those unto an actual “conformity with the image of his Son,” (*viz.* in glory, as appears verse 30,) whom he hath predestinated thereunto, who are such as love him, and thereupon are approved by him, you are to understand, that “whom he hath” so “predestinated, he hath also called,” *i. e.* hath

purposed or decreed to call, viz., to the knowledge of his Son or of his gospel; *i. e.* to afford a more plain and effectual discovery of him unto them than unto others whom he hath not so predestinated. By the way, this call doth not necessarily suppose a saving answer given unto it by the called, no whit more than that calling mentioned Matt. 20:16, and Matt. 22:14, only it supposeth a real purpose and intent on God's part, to make it very sufficient to procure such an answer to it from those that are called. The apostle advanceth towards his proposed end, and addeth thus; “ Whom he called, them he also justified *i. e.* according to our late explication of the word called, he hath purposed or decreed to justify, viz., in case the called obstruct him not in his way, or by their unbelief render not themselves incapable of justification by him. The clause following, the last in the period, is likewise to be understood with a like proviso or clause of exception, as viz., thus; and “whom he hath justified, them hath he also glorified,” *i. e.* hath purposed or decreed to save or glorify them, in case they retain the grace of justification conferred upon, them unto the end, and do not make shipwreck of that faith upon which it was conferred.

That these decrees or purposed acts of God here specified are to be understood in their successive dependences, with such a condition or proviso, respectively, as those mentioned, and not absolutely, peremptorily, or without condition, appears,

1. By the like phrase or manner of expression frequent in the Scripture elsewhere ; I mean, where such purposes or decrees of God the respective executions whereof are suspended upon such and such conditions, are notwithstanding simply and positively, and without any mention of condition expressed and asserted. “Wherefore,” saith the man of God sent unto Eli, “ the Lord God of Israel saith, I *said* indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, shall walk before me,” meaning in the office and dignity of the priesthood, “ for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me: for,” *See.*, 1 Sam. 2:30. “I said indeed,” *i. e.* I verily purposed or decreed, or I promised according to my real purpose or decree. Understand it either of purpose or promise, it comes much to one, a promise always including or presupposing a purpose answerable to it. (See Chap, 11.) When God made the promise, and so declared his purpose accordingly, that Eli and his father’s house should walk before him for ever, he expressed no condition as required to the execution or

performance of it; yet here it plainly appears that there was a condition understood, viz. the regular and worthy walking of Eli and his father's house in that office. In the same kind of dialect Samuel speaketh to Saul: "Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now the Lord" (*stabiliverat*) "had established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever: but now thy kingdom shall not continue," &c. 1 Sam. 13:13. "The Lord had established," *i. e.* had verily purposed or decreed to have established it for ever, viz. in case thou and thy posterity had walked obediently with him; not that his purpose itself, considered as an act or conception of the mind of God, depended upon this or upon any other condition whatsoever, (all God's purposes and decrees, without exception, are in such a respect absolute and independent, as hath been said formerly,) but that the actual establishment of his kingdom according to such a purpose depended hereupon. Thus God's purpose of preserving the lives of all that were with Paul in the ship, is expressed unto him in positive and absolute terms: "And lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee," Acts 27:24; yet evident it is, afterwards, that there was a condition tacitly included in this purpose or decree, viz. the continuance or stay of the mariners in the ship until the rest had opportunity to shift for themselves as well as they: "Except these abide in the ship," saith Paul to the centurion and soldiers, "ye cannot be saved," ver. 31. In like manner, God's purpose or decree concerning the destruction of Nineveh within forty days was signified unto Jonah in a positive and assertive tenor of words: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," Jonah 3:4; yet it is well known that God purposed not the execution of this his purpose, but only in case of the obduration and impenitency of the inhabitants thereof. And most frequently the purpose and decree of God concerning the punishment of wicked and ungodly men, is expressed by the Holy Ghost absolutely and assertively, without the least mention of any condition of relaxation or reversal, (see Matt. 3:10; 5:19 ; Mark 16:16; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10 ; John 3:36, &c. ;) yet from other passages of Scripture it is fully evident that this decree of his is conditional in such a sense which imports a non-execution of the punishment herein decreed, upon the repentance of the persons against whom the decree is bent. In like manner, though the purpose and decree of God for the justification of those who are called, and so for the glorifying of those that shall be justified, be, in the

Scripture in hand, delivered in an absolute and unconditionate form of words, yet is it no ways necessary to suppose (the most familiar, frequent, and accustomed expression of Scripture in such cases exempting us from any such necessity), that therefore these decrees must needs bring forth against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, so that, for example, he that is called by the word and Spirit of God, must needs be justified whether he truly believeth or no ; and he that is justified, must needs be glorified, whether he persevereth or no.

If it be objected and said, Yea, but he that is called, in the sense here meant, must needs believe, and consequently be justified; and so he that is justified must needs persevere, and so be glorified.

I answer, that whether either the one or the other of these assertions be so or no, it must be judged of by other Scriptures ; certain it is, by what hath been argued concerning the frequent usage of the Scripture in point of expression, that it cannot be concluded or determined by the Scripture in hand.

If it be yet further objected concerning all the places mentioned, wherein the conditional decrees of God, commonly so called, are positively and without condition expressed, that the conditions respectively included in them, and left to be understood in such expressions, are plainly enough mentioned in Scripture elsewhere; whereas no such conditions as I would obtrude upon the decrees of God so positively and peremptorily expressed, as we have heard, in the Scripture in hand, can be proved from any other Scripture to relate or appertain unto them,—to this I also answer, 1. That by the tenor of this objection it is granted that the peremptoriness and absoluteness of the said decrees cannot be inferred from the Scripture now under debate, but that recourse must be had to other places for the proof hereof: therefore no perseverance of saints is concludable from this Scripture. 2. For other Scriptures, we have already in part, and shall, God so pleasing, further show in due time, that none of those which are counted pillars of such a doctrine have any communion at all with it. Nay, 3, and lastly, we shall, I doubt not, be able to show that there are other Scriptures from which the conditions specified as relating to the said decrees, maybe undeniably evinced to relate unto them accordingly. In the meantime, that the decrees or purposed acts of God expressed in the Scripture in hand, as viz. his justifying those that are called, and so his glorifying those that are

justified, have no such peremptory or essential connexion between them, but that the former, in reference to particular persons, may be put in execution, and take place, without the latter, I demonstrate,

2. By this reason. If the apostle should frame this series or chain of divine acts, with an intent to show or teach the uninterruptibleness of it in what case or cases soever, he should fight against his general and main scope or design in that part of this chapter which lieth from about verse 17 to the end; which clearly is this, to exhort, strengthen, and encourage them to constancy and perseverance in suffering afflictions. For to suggest any such thing unto them as that being called and justified, nothing could possibly interpose to hinder them from being glorified, was to furnish them with a plain motive or ground on which to neglect his exhortation in that kind. For who will be persuaded to suffer tribulation, or things grievous to be endured, for the obtaining of that which they have sufficient assurance given that they shall obtain, whether they suffer such things or no? Therefore certainly the apostle did not intend here to teach or imply the certainty of perseverance in those which are once justified unto salvation, against all carriages and miscarriages of these persons whatsoever.

3, and lastly, I demonstrate the same thing yet further, by this consideration. If God should justify all without exception whom he calleth, and that against all bars of wickedness and unbelief possible to be laid in his way by those who are called, then might ungodly and unbelieving persons inherit the kingdom of God and of Christ. But the Scripture speaks aloud the impossibility, or, however, the non-futurity hereof. Ergo, The reason of the connexion in the major proposition is evident, it being a known truth that persons justified are in a condition or present capacity of inheriting the kingdom of God.

If it be objected that the said connexion is tardy in this, that it supposeth that which ought not to be supposed, viz. that persons called by God, in the sense of the word “calling” here meant, may lay such bars of wickedness or unbelief in the way which shall hinder God from justifying them; I answer, Judas, Demas, Simon Magus, and others were called, and yet they laid such bars as we speak of in the way, and by which their justification, at least their final justification, was obstructed and prevented. If it be replied, But these were not called by God, in the sense of the apostle’s “called,” in the place under question; I answer, 1. It hath



not yet been proved by any man, nor, I believe, ever will be, that the calling here spoken of imports any such act or work of God, whereby the called are irresistibly necessitated savingly to believe. If it imports no such thing as this, what hinders but that the persons mentioned might have been called with or by that very kind of calling which is here spoken of? 2. Suppose it should be granted that the calling here spoken of is that kind of calling which is always accompanied with a saving answer of faith, yet neither doth this prove but that even such called ones may obstruct and prevent, by wickedness and unbelief, their final justification, and consequently their glorification. If so, then the chain of divine acts or decrees here framed by the apostle, is not indissolvable in any such sense which imports an infallible and universal exertion or execution of the latter, wheresoever the former hath taken place. That Judas was called with such a calling as this, is Chrysostom's collection from Matt. 19:28, from whom Peter Martyr knows not well how to dissent in the point ; and how probable, at least, it is that the other two mentioned, Simon Magus, and especially Demas, were partakers of the like calling with him, may be considered in due time. But that they all three, with wickedness and unbelief, barred up the way against their final justification is, I suppose, every man's hypothesis and grant, or conjecture, at least.

But some, it may be, will yet further object against the interpretation given, and plead, 1. That the connexion between these two links of this chain, predestination to a conformity with Christ, and calling, is simply and absolutely indissolvable, so that, for example, whosoever is thus predestinated by God, never fails of being called by him. 2. That it is altogether unlikely, that in one and the same series or concatenation of Divine actions, there should not be the same fixedness or certainty of coherence between all the particulars, so that, for example, there should be as much certainty that he that is called, shall be justified; and again, that he that is justified shall be glorified, as there is that he that is predestinated shall be called. To this I answer,

1. By a demurrer upon the former of these pleas, which was, that the connexion between the predestination of God mentioned and his calling, is uninterruptible by any interveniency whatsoever. Somewhat doubtful to me it is, whether a person, who by means of the love of God, which is in him at present, falls under his decree of predestination, and consequently by virtue of this decree is predestinated to be conformed to the image of

Christ, may not possibly before the time appointed by God for his calling be changed in that his affection, and consequently pass from under that decree of predestination, and fall under another decree of God opposite thereunto, and so never come to be called. But,

2. To the latter of the said pleas, I answer, by denying the unlikelihood therein asserted. For in one and the same concatenation of Divine acts, the aspect and manner or kind of dependence between act and act, may vary according to their different natures, or the different tenor of God's decrees concerning them. As for example. God may decree to create or give being unto a man ; again, he may decree to give unto this man a sufficiency of means and power, whereby to maintain himself in this being given unto him. Again yet further, he may decree to give unto this man not only a sufficiency of means and power, to make good his possession of that being thus given him, but further, to improve his present being first given unto him into a better and more desirable being. Fourthly, He may yet further decree to promote and advance the condition of this his creature, man, above the line of his first being.

In this subordinate concatenation of Divine acts, all decreed by him, there is not the same aspect or relation, I mean in point of necessity and contingency, between every former act and that which followeth. As for instance; the second act of the four now mentioned may, partly by reason of the tenor of the decree by which it was decreed by God, partly by reason of the nature of it, I mean in reference to some Divine projection or end, have an absolute and uninterruptible dependence upon, or connexion with, the first; so that in case God creates a man, he is absolutely and against all interveniencies whatsoever resolved to confer upon him that sufficiency of power which was mentioned, neither man himself, angel, or devil could prevent or hinder God from conferring such an endowment upon man, being created by him. But it doth not follow from hence that there must needs be the like aspect of necessity between this second act and the third; or between the third and the fourth. For though God as well decreed the third act as the second, viz. to bestow upon his creature, man, a sufficiency of power add means whereby to improve his first being into a better, yet he did not decree it, *i. e.* the doing of it, simply and absolutely, but only provisionally, and upon the supposal of such an interveniency, one or more, which very possibly might not have intervened, as viz. either the fall of this creature, man, by

sin, and the gift of Jesus Christ upon it to die for his redemption; or else the continuance of man for a time in the honour of his creation, and entireness of his obedience unto God. First, that the fall of man was contingent, there being no cause either within him or without him necessitating him hereunto, is unquestionable; that the foreknowledge of it by God did no ways prejudice or hinder the contingency of it hath been formerly shown. 2. That the gift of Jesus Christ to die for the redemption of man depended in this sense upon his fall, viz. so as that he should not have been given in such a way, or upon such terms, I mean to die, had not man fallen, is, I suppose, the sense and apprehension of every man. 3, and lastly, That that act of God, in giving unto man power, means, and opportunity to better himself in point of condition, above the line of his creation, or first being, depends (his fall supposed, which was contingent also, as was lately said) upon the gift of Jesus Christ, so as never to have taken place in case he had not been so given, is sufficiently evident without proof. So that evident it is, that this act of God hath only an accidental or contingent dependence upon, or coherence with, the former; whereas this former hath an essential and necessary confluxion with the first, as hath been shown. There is the same consideration of the relation between the third and fourth, or last of these acts. For God, upon his decree to grant unto his creature man a sufficiency of means and opportunity to promote, in his way, viz. by higher services and greater acts of obedience, his happiness above the condition of his creation or first being, might and did decree also himself to promote (in his way, viz. by the engagement of his power) his creature's happiness accordingly. But this latter act of his, though decreed by him, doth not import an absolute necessity of performance by him, but only a conditional and contingent; the tenor of that decree of his wherein this act is decreed being thus: In case my creature man shall quit himself in any measure worthy that grace which I shall give unto him, in and through my Son Christ, I will make him greater in happiness than he was in the state of his creation. So that it is as clear as the light at noon-day, that in one and the same series or subordination of Divine acts, there may be a different habitude in point of dependence between act and act, so that one of these acts may infallibly, necessarily, and universally follow and be exerted upon another, precedent to it in the subordination; and yet another of these acts follow the next predecessor to it in the series, but contingently,

and consequently admit of many suspensions and interruptions. Therefore there is nothing in the last objection against that exposition of the Scripture in hand which hath been asserted, both the feet upon which it stands being weak and lame.

There is yet another objection, colourable, I suppose, in some men's eyes, against the said interpretation. The substance of it this: If the links of that chain of Divine acts described in this passage of Scripture may be severed or broken, by the miscarriages or unworthiness of the saints in any kind, then had the apostle no sufficient reason to build the saints so high upon it in confidence, exultations, and triumphs, as he doth in the verses immediately following: What shall we say to these things? If God be on our side, who can be against us?" And the reason is, because the saints are children of many infirmities and of much unworthiness, apt to sin against God every moment. Therefore, if their peace and salvation depend upon their own regular and worthy walkings with God, they are in a condition of no good security to be saved; and what ground then have they to rejoice and triumph at any such rate as the apostle seems here to invite and encourage them unto? To this I answer, that the heart of this objection was broken in the last preceding chapter, where we showed, upon several considerations and grounds, that the saints have cause in abundance to rejoice, yea, and to triumph, under the hope and expectation of salvation, notwithstanding any possibility they are subject unto of declining or perishing. The reader, I presume, will be satisfied in this point, upon a serious perusal of what is there written, from page 239 to the end of the chapter. I here add,

1. That the friends and favourers themselves of the common interpretation of the place in hand, and which contradicteth the exposition given, generally grant and teach that the saints themselves cannot have any peace or comfort in their faith, or assurance of salvation, whilst they walk profanely, loosely, or unfaithfully with God. So that these men themselves do suspend the peace and comfort, and, much more, the joy and triumph, of the faith of the saints upon their Christian behaviour, and regular walkings with God. Therefore, judging the exposition given, upon such an account as this, they condemn themselves, and their own doctrines.

2. The assurance of the continuance of God's love to them, and of his care over them, whilst they in any measure walk worthy of it, is a regular and

due foundation unto the saints of every whit as great a confidence, exultation, and triumph, as the apostle, in the words mentioned, entitles them unto. Yea,

3. The very particular and express ground upon which he buildeth up himself and the saints with him, in such a triumphant confidence as we heard, is this: the sense or assurance of God's love towards them, (meaning, whilst they walk with him as becometh saints, because being out of this posture they can neither have sense nor assurance of his love, as our adversaries themselves acknowledge and teach, as we lately heard,) not any assurance of the continuance of his love to them, how profane, wicked, or abominable soever they can or shall be. "What shall we say then to these things ? If God *be* with us, who can be against us ?" Therefore,

4. and lastly, Such a supposition or doctrine as this, that they that are at present justified may possibly sin themselves out of the grace of justification, and so never come to be glorified, is, upon due consideration, no bridle at all to check the holy and humble confidence or boastings of the saints in God, or in the Lord Jesus Christ: they may, in the face and presence of such a doctrine, though acknowledged and admitted for truth, lift up themselves upon the wings of a blessed security unto heaven, and rejoice that joy which is unspeakable and glorious. But of these things we spake liberally in the last chapter.

Some may yet possibly imagine that they discover a ground of confutation of all that hath been said upon the context of Scripture yet in hand, ver. 29, in those words: "That he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren." For from hence they may reason thus: If this be God's end or design in "predestinating" those "whom he knew before (or pre-approved) to be conformed to the image of his Son, (in glory,) that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren," (*i. e.* might have the honour of bringing many into part and fellowship with himself in his own blessedness and glory,) then must all they who are thus predestinated of necessity attain or come to enjoy such a conformity with him; otherwise God shall be frustrated in his design, and Jesus Christ be defeated and disappointed of that excellent honour which his Father projected for him. For if one, or some, thus predestinated, may miscarry, and never come to enjoy an actual conformity unto him in his glory, why may not others of them miscarry likewise, and consequently all; and so the great counsel or

project of God for the honour of his Son Jesus Christ he laid in the dust?  
To this I answer,

1. Suppose that Jesus Christ should have no brethren conformable unto him in glory, yet would it not follow from hence, that the counsel or design of God to make him “the first-born among many brethren,” should be made void or miscarry. For the counsel or design of God in this behalf, stood mainly and principally in this, viz. in casting this honour upon Jesus Christ, that he should be a person every ways fitted and accomplished, should act and do, or be ready and willing to act and do every such thing, whereby many of his brethren, (*i. e.* of the children of men,) if they were not most shamefully and grossly neglective of themselves, and their own greatest concernments, might come to partake with him in his great blessedness and glory. And in case men should prove thus neglective of themselves, and so as voluntarily to deprive themselves of that great salvation, which Jesus Christ out of his great love, and with the sore travail of his soul, hath prepared and made ready for them, yea, and invited and called, yea, and pressed upon them to accept at his hand, yet the honour and glory of a signal benefactor and great Saviour shall remain entire unto him; nor is there the least colour or pretence why he should suffer the least disparagement or prejudice in the thoughts either of men or angels, because of the wilful folly and madness of men to forsake their own mercies and destroy themselves. Himself owned and built upon this consideration, when he spake thus by the mouth of one of his greatest prophets: “Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength,” Isa. 49:5. In the former verse he speaks thus in his representer: “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” And immediately before the said words, thus: “And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, *to bring Jacob again to him*, Though Israel be not gathered, yet,” &c.; clearly implying, that though God’s intent and counsel was to form Christ from the womb for this end and purpose, viz. “to bring Jacob again to him,” and so to save and make him blessed, yet would it be no disparagement unto Christ, nor any miscarriage or defeature of the counsel of God herein, though Jacob should not upon this account be brought again to him, or be made blessed by Christ. The reason is, because when it is said, that

God formed Christ from the womb “to bring Jacob again to him,” the meaning is not, that he formed him with any such intent, out of any such end or design, “to bring Jacob again to him” by head and shoulders, as we use to say, or by a strong and irresistible hand; but “to bring Jacob again,” &c., *i. e.* that he might be represented and preached unto Jacob as such a person, who had atoned their sins, made their peace with God by his blood, and had purchased grace and favour and every good thing for them at his hand, in case they would repent and turn again to him: and further, that he might by his Spirit, especially in the ministry of his prophets, administer unto them inward strength and frequent excitements, abundantly sufficient to have brought them to a due consideration and embracement of these great things of their peace. In this sense, and in no other, Christ was formed by God from the womb, “to bring Jacob again to him and thus it appears also, how and in what respect God was not disappointed of his end, purpose, or intention in his forming of Christ, nor Christ himself any ways disparaged, notwithstanding Jacob was not actually converted or brought again to him. The apostle Paul likewise upon the same consideration saith of himself, and other the apostles and faithful ministers of the gospel, thus: “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish,” 2 Cor. 2:15. Whereby it appears, that howsoever God’s real intent and design in sending Christ into the world was (according to the frequent testimony of Scripture) the salvation, and not the perishing or condemnation of men, yet he was no more defeated or disappointed of his design herein, by the perishing than by the salvation of men; otherwise Christ, in the faithful ministry of the Gospel, would not be a sweet savour, *i. e.* matter of high contentment and satisfaction unto him, as well in those who perish through unbelief, as in those who are saved by believing. For who can be pleased, or much satisfied, with or under disappointments? Therefore God’s intent of saving the world by Jesus Christ, is not so to be conceived or understood, as if he intended to save men by him upon any terms, or under any consideration whatsoever, or without all provisos, limitations, or exceptions; but thus, he intended to save the world by him, *i. e.* to put the world into a capacity of salvation, and to afford unto the sons and daughters of men means and opportunities in abundance, whereby to repent and believe, and consequently to be saved. So that whensoever Christ is faithfully and

effectually preached unto men, in order to their salvation, God obtains his end and intent concerning their salvation, whether they come to be saved or no, *i. e.* whether they repent and believe, or remain impenitent in unbelief.

2. For the phrase, or manner of expression, “that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren,” I desire to give notice once for all, (for there may be frequent use of the observation in these controversies,) that it is frequent in Scripture to express a thing after the manner of an event, or consequent that will or shall come to pass, or follow upon such or such an occasion or means, someways likely to produce it, which yet frequently comes not to pass, but only is intended or desired; nay, the contrary whereof many times follows and comes to pass instead thereof. According to this dialect of speech Moses expresseth himself unto the people thus: “And the man that will do presumptuously, and not hearken unto the priest, . . . or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel: and all” (or, that all) “the people shall hear,” (or may hear) “and fear, and do no more presumptuously,” Deut. 17:12, 13. This hearing, fearing, and restraining of the people from doing presumptuously, are mentioned, if we respect the precise form of the words, as if they were such events which would always follow and come to pass upon the occasion or means specified, *viz.* the inflicting of death upon the delinquent spoken of. Yet Moses’s intent was not to affirm this, which had been an untruth to affirm, (such events as these many times failing, if at any time obtained,) but to show what God’s intent was in commanding such severe executions to be done in such cases, or rather perhaps to show what fruits might reasonably be expected from such just severity. So again in the same chapter, speaking of the king whom they should set over them, and the book of the law, “And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them,” Deut. 17:19. These words, “that he may learn,” &c., do not import the event, or effect that would certainly follow upon the duty or course prescribed, but either what God’s intentions were in prescribing such a course, or what such a course was proper and likely to effect. Many other places there are of like character and import: amongst which that in present debate is to be numbered. God predestinates these and these, or rather such and such, “to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he



might be the first-born," &c. These words, "that he might be the first-born," &c. do not necessarily import any event or effect which should certainly come to pass, or be produced by that act of God's predestination, but only such an event as was intended by God (in such a sense as intentions are appropriable unto him) in that act of his, or which would probably follow thereupon.

It may yet further be demanded, by way of objection against any explication whatsoever of the passage in hand, which makes the golden chain of Divine acts therein dissolvable in any link or part of it, in what case or cases soever, If either they who are predestinated may not be called, or they that are called may not be justified, or they that are justified not be glorified, how can the apostle's proof stand, that "all things work together for good to those who love God," which, as yourself acknowledged, is the doctrine or conclusion, the demonstration of the truth whereof the apostle intends by the producing of this golden chain of Divine acts, taking hold, in a clear subordination, one upon another? Can "all things" be said to "work together for good" to him who never comes to be glorified, but to be everlastingly condemned? To this I answer,

That this doctrine or saying of the apostle, "All things work together for good unto those who love God," is to be understood with the like explication, or grain of spiritual salt, wherewith these two, and a thousand more sentences in the Scriptures are to be seasoned; "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16. The meaning of this latter saying, to proceed a notioribus ad magis ignota, "He that believeth not shall be damned," is not this; he that now, or at present, believeth not, let him do all he will or can, let him believe a thousand times over hereafter, shall notwithstanding be damned; this, I say, is not our Saviour's meaning in that clause: his meaning is clearly enough this; "He that believeth not," viz. and continueth an unbeliever to his dying day, "shall be damned but it doth not follow from hence, that he that is a present unbeliever must of necessity live and die in unbelief, and so be damned; so that there is a sense wherein it is as true that he that believeth not may and shall be saved, viz. if he repents of his unbelief, and returns to his vomit no more. So, to search now into the former saying, when our Saviour saith, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved," his meaning is not, that he who at present believeth, and hath been or shall be baptized, shall be

saved, let him do what he will or can, let him turn apostate, make shipwreck of his faith, renounce his baptism, and the like; but, "he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved," *i. e.* he that believeth, and continueth a believer, or shall be found a believer, and a man standing fast by his baptism, and holding out his profession with constancy unto the end, shall be saved. Our Saviour's clear intent in these sayings was to show and assert, in the former, the blessed interest of faith in conjunction with a Christian profession, as, *viz.* that it gives unto men a title and rightfulness of claim to salvation; in the latter, the dreadful danger and formidable property of unbelief, as, *viz.* that it exposeth the person in whom it abides to the vengeance of hell- fire. But, as it was no part of his intent to assert any inseparableness of unbelief from the subject thereof in the latter clause; so neither did he any way intend to assert any such property unto faith in the former. In like manner, when the apostle layeth down this doctrine, "All things work together for good unto those that love God," his meaning is not, either to assert the unquenchableness or unremovableness of this affection from its present subject, or to imply that whosoever is at present a lover of God is in any such possession of that privilege he speaks of, I mean, of having "all things to work together for good unto him," that, in case his love to God languisheth and dieth, and a contrary affection succeeds in the place thereof, he can or shall never be cast out of it; but his entire and clear intent, in that position or saying of his, is to show that the love of God, in what subject or person soever it resides, and whilst it there resides, doth, by virtue of the gracious decree or will of God in that behalf, invest him with this privilege, *viz.* to have all occurrences of things relating to him, even afflictions and persecutions themselves, benefactors unto him. To make this good, he shows what God hath fully purposed or decreed to do for such men, or, which is the same, what he hath predestinated such men unto, as, *viz.* to a conformity with or to the image of his own Son, the Lord Christ, *i. e.* to make them glorious and blessed in such a way or upon such terms as Jesus Christ himself, who was the greatest lover of God that ever was, is now become glorious ; unto whose glorification all things that happened unto him in this present world, and more especially his sufferings, jointly contributed and wrought. And, for further satisfaction, how, by what means and degrees God actually brings these persons, *viz.* continuing still lovers of him, to this conformity with Christ in his glory,

he adds, "Moreover, whom he did" thus " predestinate, them he also called," *i. e.* as was formerly interpreted, he purposed to call, viz. to the knowledge of his Son as the Saviour of the world, and calleth them accordingly ; in which respect they are said to be persons " called according to his purpose," verse 28; and " whom he called, them he also justified," *i. e.* purposed to justify, and justifieth accordingly; " and whom he justified, them also he glorified," *i. e.* purposed to glorify, or, to bring to an actual conformity with Christ in his glory, and glorifieth them accordingly. Why the purpose or intended actings of God are expressed in Scripture rather in the preterperfect tense than either in the present or future, is accounted elsewhere in this Discourse. But in all these gradations mentioned of the counsel of God concerning the bringing of those that love him unto a conformity with Christ in his glory, the same subject, formally considered, *i. e.* those that love him as such, is to be understood ; so that in case the subject be changed under or between any of the said gradations, and he, for example, who loved God, being yet only predestinated by God to be conformed unto Christ in glory, and not called, or being called and not yet justified, or being justified and not yet glorified, shall, either before his calling, though predestinated, or before his justification, though called, or before his glorification, though justified, be alienated in his affection from God, and having loved him, shall cease to love him, and suffer an hatred of God secretly to grow upon him, it is not to be conceived that God, notwithstanding such a change in him, should advance or carry him on by the remaining steps or gradations unto glory, but that, wherever this heavenly affection of his love to God shall expire and leave him, there the counsel of God, also, concerning his glorification, should leave him, and nothing be further done or acted by him in order thereunto, unless, haply, he returns unto his former affection. The apostle s intent, in the passage in hand, was to declare the series and tenor of God's counsels for the glorious benefit and good of those who should love him, not of those who should cease to love him, or apostatise from their affection towards him; nor yet to teach, imply, or insinuate in the least, the undecayableness or unquenchableness of this affection in men. But enough for the clearing of this place.

I shall only propound and answer one Scripture more upon the account we are now drawing up, which is frequently argued with great

importunity for the doctrine of perseverance. The tenor of the place is this, “And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,” Jex. 31:39, 40. In these words, say our antagonists in the present controversy, is manifestly contained an absolute promise, of perseverance made by God unto his church. To this I answer, that it can no ways be proved, nor is it any ways probable, that the grace of perseverance should be here absolutely promised unto saints or believers. For,

1. Evident it is from the whole tenor of the chapter, that the words contain a special promise made particularly to the Jews.
2. As evident it is, upon the same account, that the promise here mentioned, was not made only to the saints or sound believers amongst the Jews, who were but few, but to the whole body, or generality of them. Peruse the latter part of the chapter, from about verse 30, to the end.
3. It is yet upon the same account as evident as either of the former, that this promise was made unto this nation of the Jews, when and whilst they were, or at least considered as now being, in the iron furnace of the Babylonian captivity. “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath, and I will bring them again unto this place,” &c. ver. 37.
4. From these words now cited, so immediately preceding the passages offered to debate, it clearly appears that the promise in these passages relates unto, and concerns their reduction and return from, and out of that captivity, into their own land. Therefore,
5. It cannot be a promise of absolute and final perseverance in grace unto the end of their lives respectively. For, 1. The promise was made unto the body or generality of this people, even unto all those that God had driven into all countries in his anger and fury, and not only unto the saints or true believers amongst them, unless we shall say that they were only the holy persons amongst them that were thus driven by him. The promise then respects as well the unfaithful as the true believers in this nation; and so cannot be a promise of perseverance in grace unto these. 2. The promise here exhibited, was a promise appropriated and fitted to the present state and condition of the Jews, who were now scattered up and

down the world, and in a sad captivity, at least were thus considered in this promise as was lately said, in which respect it must needs be conceived to contain somewhat peculiar to that their condition. Now the promise of perseverance in grace, according to the doctrine of our adversaries, was a standing promise amongst them, and so had been from the first, equally respecting them, or the elect amongst them, in every estate and condition. 3. The promise of perseverance in grace, according to the same principles, includes in it, or supposeth such an interposure of God by his Spirit and grace, which shall and will, and must needs, infallibly produce the effect of perseverance in all those to whom it is made, *i. e.* true believers; whereas, evident it is from the prophet Ezekiel, that this promise notwithstanding, the Jews might rebel against and apostatise from God. The whole passage in Ezekiel is this: “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,” Ezek. 11:17, 18, &c. There is nothing more clear than that the promise contained in these words, is for substance and import the same with that in consideration from the prophet Jeremy. Yet here it follows, “But as for them, whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own head, saith the Lord God,” verse 21. Which evidently supposeth, that notwithstanding the former promise, pretended to be a promise, either in whole or in part, of persevering in grace, yet they to whom it is made may walk after the heart of detestable things; *i.e.* so practise detestable things as to promote their interest, and cause them to be practised by others, and that to their own ruin and destruction. For that this threatening, “But as for them,” &c. concerns the same persons or nation to whom the precedent promises

were made, the carriage of the context makes out of question, and besides, is the general sense of interpreters upon the place ; yea, and Calvin himself understands it of the Israelites. So that no absolute perseverance can with reason be supposed to be contained in the said promise. 4, and lastly, If absolute perseverance should be here promised, there is no time or season can be imagined wherein the promise should have been fulfilled by God. If it be said, that it hath always been fulfilled in the elect and faithful, I answer, 1. That it hath been already proved that it was made to the main body and community of the Jewish nation, and not only to the elect or faithful amongst them. And therefore, if it should be fulfilled in these only, it should be fulfilled but by half, and indeed not to that proportion; and consequently, if propriety of speech be admitted, not fulfilled at all. 2. If this be all the fulfilling of it, it was as much fulfilled during, and under the captivity, yea, and before it, as at any time afterwards. For, in the sense of those against whom we now argue, the elect and faithful always persevered in grace unto the end.

If it be yet demanded, But do not those words, “ I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever;” as also those, “ I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,” plainly imply their final perseverance ? I answer;

1. That these words, “that they shall not depart from me,” savour too much of the translation; the original would rather have them thus, “that they *may* not depart from me,” as the translators also themselves render words of the same character in the former verse. “And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever.” And thus both Arias Montanus, and Junius and Tremellius also render them.

2. The words thus read do not necessarily import the actual event or taking place, of the effect intended by God in the promise, and his performance thereof, but only his intention itself in both these, together with the sufficiency and aptness of what he promiseth, for the producing of such an effect in them. As when our Saviour expressed himself thus unto the Jews, “ But these things I say, that ye might be saved,” John 5:34; he did not suppose that they either would or should be infallibly saved, by means of what he spake, for a few verses after, speaking still to the same persons, he saith, “And ye will not come to me that ye might have life;” but he declared, that the real desire and intent of his heart and soul, in speaking to them as he did, was, that they might be saved; and

withal, that the words which he spake to them were such as by the due minding and hearkening whereunto they might and should have been saved. There is the same consideration of what God said unto Adam: "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Gen. 3:11. It cannot be inferred from hence that Adam did not eat of this tree, For we all too well know that he did eat thereof, but only that the intent and scope of God's commandment unto him concerning this tree was, that he should not eat thereof. See what was lately and more largely observed touching such expressions as these, page 302 of this chapter.

3. The certainty of the continuance of the external and civil prosperity of the Jewish nation, might much more colourably be concluded from sundry passages in this promissory contexture of Scripture than the certainty of their perseverance in grace from those mentioned. For here God promiseth that he will do thus and thus by them, "for the good of them and of their children after them," verse 39. And again, that he "will make an everlasting covenant with them, that he will not turn away from them to do them good; that he will rejoice over them to do them good, and will plant them in that their land assuredly, with his whole heart and with his whole soul," verses 40, 41. And yet we know, that all these promises and engagements on God's part notwithstanding, God since the making of them, hath turned away from them, and that in greater displeasure than ever before; yea, and that, as the apostle saith, "his wrath is come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. 2:16; and they are accordingly at this day the most contemptible and miserable nation under heaven. This plainly sheweth that all these promises were conditional, though no condition appears in mention, and the performance of them intentionally suspended upon their good behaviour and obedience to him that made them. See more upon this account in the premises. If then the temporal promises running along in the same current of discourse with spiritual, and much more assertively expressed than these, were conditional, and have suffered a non-performance through a non-performance of the condition intended; why may we not suppose the spiritual promises also to be subject to the same law? Nay certainly,

4. Had the spiritual promises been merely positive and unconditioned, the temporal would have been such also, at least they had not been

obnoxious to a non-performance. For had God actually, and with effect, given them one heart and one way, so that they had actually feared him for ever, or put his fear in their hearts upon any such terms, that they had not departed from him, questionless all the temporal promises had brought forth; God would not have turned away from them to do them good, and their children after them, but would have rejoiced over them to do them good, would have planted them in their land, &c.

5. That expression in the said passages, “And I will make an everlasting *covenant* with them,” plainly supposeth that the whole contexture of promises therein was but conditional, it being the nature and property of a covenant never to engage one party alone, but both, or all comprised in it; and when one party refuseth to make good the terms imposed thereby upon him, to disoblige and free the other. Therefore,

6, and lastly, The true and clear intent and meaning of the spiritual promises made unto the people of the Jews, now in captivity, in the Scripture in hand, and particularly of the expressions last objected, is this: “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever; and will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not (or may not) depart from me, *i. e.* I will deal so above measure graciously and bountifully with them, as well in matters relating to their spiritual condition, as in things which concern their outward condition, that if they be not prodigiously refractory, stubborn, and unthankful, I will overcome their evil with my goodness, will cause them to own me for their God ; and will reduce them as one man to a loving and loyal frame and temper of heart towards me, that they shall willingly, and with a full and free purpose of heart, fear and serve me for ever. To secure this interpretation,

1. That is to be remembered which hath been offered to consideration already, viz., That it is the frequent and familiar dialect of Scripture, to ascribe the doing of things, or the effects themselves, unto those, whether God or men, who either minister occasion, or afford proper or likely means or endeavours for the doing of them, whether ever they be actually effected or no. A pleasant number of instances in this kind you shall find drawn together elsewhere. Repetitions are needless where primitives are at hand. According to this kind of expression, God may be said to give men one heart and one way, that, &c., and so to put his fear into their hearts, that, &c, when he vouchsafeth and exhibiteth such motives,



means, and opportunities unto them, which are efficacious and proper to work them to such a frame and disposition of heart and soul, out of which men are wont firmly to resolve, to love, serve, and obey him for ever, whether they be actually wrought or brought hereunto or no. In this sense it is easy to conceive when and how the said promises were performed or fulfilled, as, viz. to a good degree in, upon, and soon after that famous deliverance out of their seventy years' captivity, God hereby, as by many other signal mercies vouchsafed unto them soon after their return, about the repairing of their city and temple, as likewise by the effectual ministry of several great prophets raised up amongst them from time to time, mightily engaging them all to devote themselves unto him and his service for ever.: but more fully and gloriously, when the great Messiah was sent unto them in the flesh, by whose unparalleled holiness in life and conversation, together with his frequent and wonderful miracles, and especially by his doctrine, so full of heavenly authority, light, and power, they were not only compelled into such an heart, and such a way, wherewith, and wherein, to have feared (*i.e.*, to have religiously served and obeyed) him for ever. Insomuch, that proving such apostates, as they wilfully became, under such transcendent means as they had, to have rendered them the best and most faithful people under heaven unto their God, they declared themselves to be the most stiff-necked and rebellious generation of men in all the world; and were judged by God accordingly. Take any other sense of the promises or words now in question, especially that which is so much contended for, and which imports a final perseverance in grace to be wrought in this people by the irresistible hand of God; and it will be impossible for any man to find so much as by probable conjecture, when, or how, they should ever be fulfilled. To say, that they might, even in that sense, which I so much oppose, he fulfilled constantly in the elect of this people, is to say that which reason will gainsay. For, 1. An absolute or unconditioned promise, made to a great number of men, cannot be said to be fulfilled, when the thing promised is exhibited only to some few of them. Now the promises under debate were clearly made to the whole body or nation of the Jews, (as we have formerly proved from the express context,) and not to the elect only amongst them. 2. According to their judgments, who plead the fulfilling of them in this sense, the persons for whose sakes and comfort they were made, the elect, might, yea, must needs have had every whit as much

comfort without them, as they could have with or by them. For they knew, before the making of any of these promises to them, that, being elect, and once in a state of grace, they should persevere therein unto the end. And thus these great and signal promises of God shall be rendered void, and mere impertinences unto those, for whose sake only they are supposed to have been made. 3, and lastly, to say they were fulfilled in the elect, in the sense gainsaid, is to beg the question, instead of digging for it.

2. The Scriptures many times assert the futurity, or coming to pass of things not yet in being, not only when the coming of them to pass is certain, or certainly known unto God, but upon a probability only, or likelihood of their coming to pass, in respect of means used, or to be used, for the bringing of them, to pass. Upon this account, God himself is represented by our Saviour in his parable of the vineyard, as. speaking thus, in the person of the lord of the vineyard, “ They will reverence my son,” Matt. 12:6, in case I shall vouchsafe to send him unto them. And yet the event showed that they were so far from reverencing him, that when he came to them,. “they took him, and slew him, and cast him out of the vineyard.” So when he saith, upon occasion of the punishment, which he commandeth to be inflicted upon the man that should “do presumptuously, that all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,” Deut. 17:12, 13. He doth not speak it out of any certainty of knowledge in him, that it would, or should, actually so come to pass, (for many, doubtless, of this people did not so fear, as to forbear doing presumptuously, notwithstanding the exemplariness of such a punishment,) but because the severe and thorough execution of justice in this kind, was a proper and probable means to restrain all sorts of persons amongst them from the like sins. See page 302 of this chapter. In this notion and idiom of Scripture, also, God may say, “I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever,” not out of a certainty of knowledge, or determination in himself, that any such heart, or way, should actually, and with effect, be given unto them, which would infallibly produce such an effect in them, as is here specified; but because he was purposed so to entreat them, and to afford such excellent administrations of his grace and Spirit unto them, which should be very pregnant, proper, and efficacious, to create such an heart in them, and to put them into such a way, that they should never have declined from his

worship and service, whilst the sun and moon endure. This answer, I acknowledge, is of much affinity with the former. Therefore,

3, and lastly, that no such sense was intended by God in the words or promises yet under consideration, which imports any certainty of a final perseverance in grace, in those to whom they are spoken and made, fully appears from all those prophetic passages and predictions in the Old Testament, which are many in number, and very plain and pregnant in import, wherein that sad breach, which afterwards happened between God and this people, to whom these promises were made, and which amounted even to a rejection of them from being any longer a people unto him, is foretold by him. For that God should absolutely promise such an heart unto a people, which should infallibly cause them to fear him for ever, and not to depart from him; and yet withal prophesy the great and general apostasy of this people from him, and their rejection, upon that account, by him, doubtless lieth not within the verge of any man's belief, who takes any competent care what he believeth. I trust, the Scripture now last opened, will from henceforth be put to no more trouble, about any contribution of aid towards the maintenance of the doctrine of absolute perseverance.

Some other Scriptures possibly there may be, besides those inquired into in this chapter, wherein some may imagine the treasure of such a perseverance to be hid; but these which we have strictly examined upon the matter, have still been counted the pillars of that doctrine; and yet, as we have seen, are no supporters of it. Nor do I question, but that by those unquestionable principles and rules of interpretation, by which the mind of God in the Scriptures discussed in this chapter, hath been brought into a clear light, all seeming compliance that way in others also, may be reduced : and so the wisdom, which hath been revealed from heaven, perfectly acquitted from all interposure by way of countenance on the behalf of the commonly-taught doctrine of perseverance. Two texts I call to mind at present which are sometimes called in to the assistance of the doctrine of perseverance hitherto opposed, and have not received, answer in this chapter. The former is Matt. 7:18; the latter, Rom. xi. 29. But for this latter, it hath been sufficiently handled upon another account, Chap. 8 page 224. As to the former, we shall, I conceive, have occasion to speak in the second part of this discourse. We now proceed to the examination of such arguments and grounds otherwise, upon which the said doctrine,

in some men's eyes, stands impregnable.

## CHAPTER 11.

**A further continuation of the former digression, wherein the arguments and grounds commonly alleged in defence of the received doctrine of Perseverance, are detected of insufficiency, proved, and declared null.**

WE shall begin with that which is the first-born of the strength of our adversaries in this kind. “That,” say they, “which God hath promised in his word is certain, and shall take place, against all opposition and contradiction whatsoever. But God hath promised in his word that all true believers shall both totally and finally persevere; therefore all such shall certainly so persevere, against whatsoever may or shall at any time oppose their persevering.” To this I answer,

1. By explaining the major proposition, “What God hath promised in his word is certain, and shall take place,” &c., viz. in such a sense, and upon such terms, as God would be understood in his promise. But what God promiseth in one. sense is not certain of performance in another : as for example; God promised the preservation of the lives of all that were with Paul in the ship; but his intent and meaning in this promise was not this preservation against whatsoever might possibly be done by those in the ship against it, or to hinder it; but with this proviso or condition, that they in the ship should hearken unto him, and follow his advice, in order to their preservation ; as is evident from those words of Paul himself, to whom this promise was made, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe,” Acts 27:31 ; so that had the centurion and rest in the ship suffered the mariners to have left the ship, whilst it was yet at sea, there had been no failing in promise with God though they had all been drowned. In like manner, though Christ promised to his twelve apostles, Judas being yet one of the twelve, that “in the regeneration,” *i. e.* the resurrection or restoration of the world, “they should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel,” Matt. 19:28, yet he is not to be judged a promise-breaker, though Judas never comes to sit upon one of these thrones. And in case the rest of the twelve had declined from that integrity of heart under which that promise was made unto them, as Judas did, neither would it have argued any breach of promise in Christ to have advanced others upon these thrones instead of them; the reason

whereof is elsewhere noted from Peter Martyr, whose doctrine it is, that “the promises of God are wont to be made with respect had to the present estate and condition of things with men.” His meaning is, as appears by the tenor of the adjacent discourse, that all God’s promises made unto men, being or considered as being under such and such qualifications, are not to be understood as any otherwise intended by him to be performed unto them, than as abiding, and whilst they shall abide, in the same qualifications. As for example; what promises soever God makes unto believers, with respect had to their faith or as they are believers, are not to be looked upon as performable, or obliging the Maker of them unto them, in case they shall relapse into their former unbelief: but of this we spake plentifully in our last chapter and elsewhere. The major proposition thus explained and understood, we admit, whatsoever God promiseth is certain, &c., viz. according to the true intent and meaning of the promise.

The minor, also, relieved with an orthodox and sober explication, as likewise the conclusion itself and whole argument, is blameless, and thinketh no evil against the doctrine now under vindication; for in this sense it is most true that God hath promised that all true believers shall persevere; *i. e.* that all true believers, formally considered, *i. e.* as such, and abiding such, shall persevere, viz. in his grace and favour. But this, I presume, is not the sense of the argument-makers: their meaning is, that God hath promised that all true believers shall persevere thus believing, or in the truth of their faith, against all interveniences whatsoever; and that he will so interpose with his grace and power that none of them shall ever make shipwreck of their faith, upon what quicksands of lust and sensuality soever they shall strike, against what rocks of obduration and impenitency soever they shall dash. In this sense their proposition, I confess, is sore against us, but their proofs are weak and contemptible; nor will any of the Scriptures from which they claim countenance and confirmation own the cause, or comport with them therein. Some, of the fairest appearance and greatest hope that way, we examined narrowly in the next preceding chapter, and found them in heart much estranged from them; as, viz. Jer. 32:38–40; Matt. 16:18; John 10:9, with some others. I acknowledge that there are several others, besides those there discharged, chosen by men of that judgment to serve in the same warfare; but they are all of the same mind with their fellows, who, as we have

heard, detract that service. Most of these are promises anciently made unto the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, all, or most of them, of like import with that Jer. 32:39, &c. largely opened towards the end of the former chapter, and are to be measured with the same line of interpretation. Nor can it ever be so much as competently proved that they were made with appropriation unto saints, or unto true believers, but unto the body and generality of that people or nation which we mentioned. The particulars are these: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 10. So again; "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," Isa. 59:21. And again; "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercy: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness," &c. Hos. 2:19, 20.

For the first of these places, evident it is that there is nothing asserted, or promised by God therein, but only his faithfulness in his promises, and the sure and certain performance of his covenant. But that the tenor or substance of this covenant should be, that they who once truly believe should be by him infallibly, and by a strong hand, against all interposals of sin, wickedness, backsliding, rebellion whatsoever, preserved in such a faith, is not so much as by any word, syllable, iota, or tittle, here intimated. Yea, that it is contrary to the nature of a covenant to impose articles and conditions upon one party only, and to leave the other free, was lately shown; and particularly that God required terms of those with whom he made or was about to make the covenant here spoken of, is evident from verse 3 of the following chapter: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David the plain meaning whereof clearly is, that, upon condition of their obedience and faithfulness unto him, he would engage himself to be a God and glorious benefactor unto them for ever, and that the breach should never be on his side. Concerning the second place, "As for me, this is my covenant with them," &c. 1. It may as well be conceived to hold forth a charge or

injunction of obedience unto the people, as a promise from God of any thing. And Mr. Calvin himself upon the place, acknowledgeth that some translate the words in the imperative mood, "Let not my words depart," and granteth withal, that the future tense will bear an imperative construction. According to this sense, the meaning of those words, "This is my covenant with them," is this, That covenant of perpetual grace and mercy which I make with them, requireth this of them, in order to the performance of it on my part, that they quench not my Spirit which I shall put into them, nor forsake my word that I shall teach them. Or,

2. If we look upon the passage as promissory, there is little reason to judge it as promising the gift or grace of perseverance unto true believers, whatever their deportment shall be. For, as for conditional promises unto believers of perseverance in faith unto the end, as, viz. upon their Christian and good behaviour, diligence, &c., I question not but that the Scripture abounds with them ; and that the promise contained in this verse (if there be any such thing in it) be it a promise of perseverance in faith, or of whatever besides, is none other I mean than conditional, cannot reasonably be gainsaid, or the contrary proved. Nay,

3. Those words in the beginning of the verse, "As for me, which Junius translates, "De me autem," *i. e.* but as much as concerns me, seem to import the promise ensuing to be conditional, and that God is ready, willing, and resolved, for his part, to deal worthily and bountifully with them, even according to all that which followeth, always provided that they the other party keep covenant with him, and do what he requires of them. But,

4. Be it granted, that the words in debate are promissive, and that whether with condition, or without condition, yet nothing can be more clear than this, that they are or were directed and spoken, not (as was said concerning the former passage) to saints or true believers only, but to the whole posterity of Jacob, or nation of the Jews. The apostle Paul questionless understood them thus directed and meant, as appears Rom. 11:26, where he applies the promise contained in the words immediately preceding (with a little expository variation of them, after the New Testament manner) to this whole nation. "And so," saith he, "all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Meaning, that when the time



cometh, that upon the repentance of this nation he shall pardon that great and grievous apostasy and rebellion under the guilt whereof they have lain for many generations, he will give salvation unto them all, *i. e.* freedom from all their present miseries and calamities, by the hand of a great Redeemer, or Deliverer, who “shall come out of Sion,” (*i. e.* whose descent shall be of themselves; or who “shall come out of Sion,” *i. e.* out of heaven, typified by Mount Sion, and which may be called Sion mystical;) and he “shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;” ungodliness, *i. e.* (in that dialect so frequent in Scripture, wherein sin is put for the punishment of sin, as righteousness also for the reward of righteousness,) the punishment of that signal ungodliness from the house of Jacob (the Jews), for which they have suffered the heavy displeasure of God so long. Or thus: he “shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob *i. e.* partly by means of that wonderful deliverance which he shall bring unto them, partly by other gracious administrations of his towards and amongst them, he shall preserve them, or turn them away, (for to “turn away ungodliness from Jacob,” is, I suppose, by an hypallage, put for turning away Jacob from ungodliness,) from the ungodliness of that unthankfulness and backsliding whereunto they and their forefathers have been so extremely subject from the beginning. Now then, the verse and words immediately preceding being promissory, and that to the whole nation, it is no ways like, but that the verse and words following being promissory also, and every ways as appropriable and applicable to the whole nation as they, should be every whit as comprehensive or extensive in respect of their object as they. Nor are there wanting amongst our best reformed expositors, who thus understand them: let Musculus be consulted upon the place.

5. Whether the said promise be conceived to respect, either the whole nation of the Jews, or only true believers amongst them, it no ways so much as sembles a promise of final perseverance unto either. Evident it is, that this promise exhibiteth and holdeth forth some new grace or favour, like unto which God had not vouchsafed any formerly, either unto the persons to whom the said promise is now made, or to any other. The very character and tenor of the promise importeth this clearly. Let it be compared either with any former promise in the Scripture, one or more, or with any dispensation of God towards any person or people, and there will be found no comportment between them. Nor for the grace or favour

of final perseverance, it is nothing, at least in the opinion of our adversaries, but what is common to all true believers, and what God hath conferred upon one and other of this generation of men from the beginning of the world.

6, and lastly, It is very improper, and doth not look like one of the wise dispensations of God, to make a serious and solemn promise unto men of that, which they might and ought to expect of course, yea, and which they might with as much comfort and security have promised unto themselves as he. For, according to those principles which we now oppose, every true believer may and ought to expect the grace of final perseverance from God as a matter of course, and of common and unalterable dispensation, yea, and shall sin if he doth it not.

If you ask, But if the promise now in discourse be not a promise of final perseverance, what is the matter or substance of it, or what doth God promise in it? Let Musculus, a learned and orthodox expositor, answer you. "God," saith he, in this promise, "speaks of the Spirit and word of the New Testament: both of which he did put upon" (or into) "his people" (meaning the Jews) "in the beginning of the dispensation of the gospel; nor hath he taken them away hitherto, however blindness may seem to have wholly possessed Israel. For there are some of this nation that are continually converted unto Christ, in whom the continuation of the Spirit and word of God may" (or will) "take place, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved." So that he placeth the substance of the promise in this, that the nation of the Jews shall never, from the days of Christ in the flesh, be wholly, altogether, or in all the members of it, destitute of the Spirit and word of Christ. This exposition supposeth nothing in the promise for the business of final perseverance. Notwithstanding I conceive that God here rather promiseth this, viz. that he will advance the dispensations of his grace and goodness towards and amongst this people, to such an excellency and height, that, if they prove not extremely unworthy and neglective above measure of their own happiness, they shall have of the Spirit and word of God abundantly amongst them, and consequently abundance of peace and happiness for ever. The promise thus understood began to operate and work, and was performed in part in and upon their deliverance from that seventy years' captivity; wrought yet more effectually at the coming of the Messiah unto them in the flesh; but the full and signal accomplishment of

it remaineth yet behind, and shall take place when the Redeemer “shall come out of Sion” unto them, and their Messiah visit them the second time.

For the third and last of the three places mentioned, “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever,” &c., it is much of the same consideration with the former, nor hath any whit more in it to support the common doctrine of perseverance than they. For, 1. The promise of the betrothing here specified, is made unto the entire body and nation of the Jews, as well unbelievers as believers, as appears by the carriage of the chapter throughout. 2. It is conditional, and the performance of it, I mean of the betrothing mentioned in it, suspended upon the repentance of this people, especially of their idolatry, and return to the true and pure worship of God, as appears verses 14, 16, 17, &c., which plainly sheweth that it was made as well, nay, rather to those that were wicked and idolatrous amongst this people than unto others, as being administered and held forth unto them chiefly for this end, to woo them away from their idols' unto God. 3. Nor can it be proved that this promise so properly or directly intends the collation of spiritual or heavenly good things unto them, as temporal; yea, the situation of it between temporal promises immediately both behind it and before it, persuades the contrary. Read the context, from verse 18, to the end of the chapter. Therefore, 4, and lastly, The true intent and purpose of this place and promise, “And I will betroth thee,” &c., is as if he should have said, When I shall by my word and Spirit, and other gracious administrations, wherein I shall appear to this people, so far prevail with them and overcome them, as to cause them to cast away their idols, and turn with their whole heart unto me, I will express myself so, with so much love and affection unto them, that they shall not lightly, neither they, nor their children after them, go a whoring from me any more,, but remain united unto me in a mutual, chaste, conjugal affection for ever. “I will betroth them unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercy;” *q. d.* I will engage and attempt to insure, both them and their affections unto me, by all variety of ways and means that are proper and likely to bring such a thing to pass; as, 1. By showing myself just and righteous unto them by keeping my promise, concerning their deliverance out of captivity at the end of seventy years; I will not fail them herein, no, not to a day or hour. 2. By punishing and judging their

enemies, and destroying those that led them captive, and held them in bondage and subjection. 3. By heaping the fruits of my love and kindness upon them otherwise, as in giving them peace, plenty, health, honour, &c. in abundance. 4, and lastly, By dealing mercifully with them, in pardoning their sins and infirmities, which they will commit daily against me ; I will not be extreme to mark what they shall do amiss, whilst their hearts shall remain perfect with me. "I will even betroth them unto me in faithfulness," *i. e.* by these and all other ways and means likely to endear myself unto them, and to assure them and their affections unto myself for ever, I will really and effectually essay and try to do it. An air of this interpretation of the place breathes in the annotations of our English divines themselves upon it, who paraphrase it thus, "I will betroth thee, I will re-establish my covenant of grace with, thee, not only to observe that faith which is required in all covenants, but also to forgive thee thy sins, and not to take notice of thy unworthiness." But according to the sense and exposition of the place given, which cannot reasonably be gainsaid, the promise therein is not absolute as to the effect of such a desponsation of this people, which should stand for ever, but only as to the means, yet these very efficacious and proper, to be used by God for the producing such an effect. And thus Tarnovius, a late and learned expositor of the reformed religion, understands it, "I will betroth thee unto me, whom," saith he, "thou formerly despisedst and shamefully forsookest, and *as much as in me lieth*, whose gifts are without repentance, Rom. 11:29, this betrothing shall stand firm for ever, nor shall this spiritual conjunction between us ever be dissolved as formerly," &c. Those words, "quod ad me," *i. e.* as far as in me lieth, or as far as concerneth me, plainly show that this author looked upon the promise of betrothing, especially as to the perpetuity of it, but as conditional; and such, which through the unfaithfulness and unworthiness of the party to be betrothed, might possibly never bring forth such a betrothment. We have once and again, if not a third time also, given notice formerly, that the using of means, endeavours, or attempts to bring things to pass, are very commonly in Scripture expressed by the effects themselves. So that all things considered, it is a little strange to me that learned and sober men should ever be tempted to build the doctrine of perseverance, as they form and teach it, upon such Scriptures as this, and those lately opened.

But, besides places of this impress, and those dismissed in the former

chapter, they insist upon others to prove that God hath made an absolute promise of final perseverance unto all true believers. Let us then briefly try the spirit of these; for if we can find so much as any one promise from God of such an import in all the Scriptures, all opposition must keep silence for ever. Some suppose they descry such a promise as we speak of, in that of David, “ They that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever,” Psalm 125:1. I answer, here is no promise that they that trust in the Lord, shall abide trusting in the Lord for ever, or that they shall not be removed from this trusting in him for ever; but only, that trusting in him, and abiding so trusting, they shall never be removed, viz. from an estate, or condition of peace and happiness, into an estate of trouble or misery. For it is a stability of happiness or safety, not of faith, that is here promised unto those that trust in the Lord. If it be objected, that even a stability in happiness, supposeth or includeth a stability in faith, inasmuch as no man can make shipwreck of his faith, but his happiness is wrecked by it; I answer, that the meaning of the promise in hand, is not that they who at present trust in the Lord, let them at any time hereafter trust or distrust him, shall yet be unremoveably happy; nor to imply, that they who once, or at any time trust in the Lord, shall be necessitated by him to trust in him for ever, but only to show that those that trust in the Lord, are, as such, and whilst such, of that kind of persons for whose preservation and safety from evil the mighty power of God himself standeth engaged, and whom he will protect from evil: as when the apostle said to the Corinthians, that they were in his heart to die and live together with them, (2 Cor. 7:3,) his meaning was not that they were so in his heart to die, &c.,—that what manner of persons soever they should prove afterwards, though they should apostatise to idolatry, blasphemy, heathenism, or the like, he could notwithstanding be well content to live and die with them; but thus, they were in his heart, &c., *i. e.* they were for the present such persons whom he singularly affected, and with whom he could be well content to hold communion both in death and life. We have given notice formerly more than once, Chap, 10., and at the beginning of this chapter, that the promises of God made unto men with respect to such and such special qualifications, are to be understood with such an explication or caution wherewith his threatenings against such and such particular sins are to be interpreted; as for example, when God threatened that “unrighteous

persons shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. 6:9; and John Baptist, that “he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life,” &c., John 3:36, &c., the meaning is not that they that are now unrighteous or unbelieving, though they should repent and believe hereafter, should yet be excluded from the kingdom of God; but that unless they shall repent of their sins they should for them be excluded. In like manner, when God promiseth stability of condition, safety, salvation, or the like, unto those that believe and trust in him, he intends no obligation hereby to these persons otherwise than upon their abiding such in those qualifications of faith and trusting in him, in regard whereof the said promises were made to them. God himself leadeth us, as it were, by the hand to such an interpretation as well of his promises as of his threatenings; such I mean, of both kinds, as those specified. “At what instant,” saith he, “I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and plant it,” *i. e.* shall promise to build or to plant either the one or the other, “if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them,” Jer. 18:7,8. Much after the same manner elsewhere, having promised or said that he that hath walked in his statutes, and kept his judgments, to deal truly, being righteous or just, “shall surely live,” Ezek. 18:7, he addeth afterwards, “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live?” ver. 24. In this passage we clearly see that this promise made by God to a righteous man, “he shall surely live,” is to be understood with this proviso and condition, that he departs not from his righteousness, which is here plainly enough supposed that he may very possibly do. Therefore this promise also, “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion,” &c., being of that kind of promise which God makes out of those gracious respects which he beareth to some special qualification in men, carrieth no further obligation in it on God’s part unto those to whom it is made, than as and whilst they remain so qualified as they were when first they came under the grace of the said promise, *i. e.* as and whilst they trust in the Lord. So that this promise

hath nothing to do, little or much, with that doctrine of perseverance which we oppose, but looketh quite another way.

Another text of Scripture sometimes urged to prove the proposition of our present contest, viz. that God hath made an absolute promise of perseverance unto true believers, is that of our Saviour, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life,” John 4:14. But neither doth this Scripture any whit more (if so much) than only face the business in hand; for here is no promise made that they who once believe, how unworthily soever they shall behave themselves, shall still be preserved by God or the Spirit of God in believing, or that they shall be necessitated always to believe; but only a declaration and assertion made by Christ of the excellency and desirableness of that life which he comes to give unto the world, above that life of nature which is common unto all. This, by comparing the words transcribed with those in the former verse, is evident: “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water,” *i. e.* of material water, such as this well affordeth, “shall thirst again,” *i. e.* is subject, notwithstanding his drinking hereof, to thirst again; “but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him,” &c., *q. d.* The best means that can be had or enjoyed to render this present life which we live free from inconvenience and that which is troublesome and contrary to it, will not effect it: the condition of this life, being subject to dissolution, will not admit of any such freedom or perfection : but whosoever shall drink, inwardly receive and believe, that doctrine which I shall administer unto him, shall hereby be made partaker of such a life which shall within a short time, (if men be careful in the interim to preserve it,) by reason of the nature and perfect Condition and constitution of it, be exempt from all sorrow, trouble, and inconvenience whatsoever, as being eternal. But,

1. That he doth not oppose that life which accrues unto men by drinking the water which he gives them, unto that natural life which they live by other means in respect of the present condition or constitution of it, or as it is enjoyed by men in this present world, is evident from hence, because he asserts it free from thirst — “shall never thirst.” Now, we know that the saints themselves, notwithstanding the life of grace which is in them by drinking the water that Christ hath given them, are yet subject to both kinds of thirst, as well that which is corporal or natural, as that which is

spiritual; yea, that spiritual thirst unto which they axe now subject, though it argues a deficiency of what they would further have or desire to be, and in that respect is troublesome, yet is it argumentative of the goodness or blessedness of their condition: “ Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled,” Matt. 5:6. By the way, this spiritual thirst, which is incident even unto that life which is derived by Christ, and the waters given by him unto men, as it is enjoyed or possessed by them in this present world, is, according to the purport of our Saviour’s own arguing in the Scripture under debate, an argument that, for the present and whilst it is obnoxious to such a thirst, it is dissolvable, and may fail: for in the latter part of the said passage he plainly implies that the eternalness of that life which springs from the drinking of his waters, is the reason or cause why it is exempt from thirst. Let the whole passage be read and minded, and this will clearly appear. If, then, the eternality of a life be the cause or reason why it is free from the inconveniency of thirst, evident it is that such a life which is not free from thirst, is not, during this weakness or imperfection of it, eternal or privileged against all dissolution. I easily grant that such a life as we now speak of, may, notwithstanding the dissolvableness of it, be in a sense called eternal, as it is frequently called in the Scriptures, viz. in semine or in fieri, as they say, as the conception of a man in the womb may be called a man; or because in respect of the native and in-bred tendency of it, and being duly nourished and preserved, it is apt in time to become eternal, formally and properly so called, even as the conception of a man in the womb, by reason of the natural frame and tendency of it, will in time, if it meets with no unnatural and destructive accident by the way, come to be a man in his full stature and strength. But as this frame or tendency of the conception we speak of doth no ways prove that therefore it must of necessity, or what will or can befall it, come in time to be a perfect man; so neither is it necessary that that life in the saints, which is seminally, inchoately, and conception-wise eternal, should, against all possible occurrences of things adverse to it, come to be actually, properly, and completely eternal. The result of this discourse amounts clearly to this, that our Saviour, in the words in hand, doth not oppose the life which comes by drinking his water to the life of nature in respect of the present and imperfect condition of it in this world, but in respect of the future and complete growth and condition of it in the world to come. Therefore,



2, When he saith that the water which he shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up, &c., his meaning is not as if either the doctrine or spirit which he gives unto men, and they drink or receive from his hand, should always actually, necessarily, and infallibly end or issue in eternal life, properly and completely so called, the Scriptures in many places testifying the contrary of both, Matt. 13:20,22; Mark 6:20; Acts 8:13, compared with ver. 20, 21 ; Heb. 6:4, 5, &c., hut that their natural course and tendency always stand that way; as the course, motion, and inclination of waters in a river always stand bent towards the sea, though they may be turned by force out of their channel, or dried up by the violent and scorching heat of the sun. Therefore neither is there any promise in this Scripture, of such a perseverance of the saints in faith, as is commonly notioned amongst us, and hath been opposed hitherto.

Another place wherein the said minor proposition, in the sense intended by the assertors, is pretended to be found, consists of these words: “ And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,” John 14:16. But,

1. Evident it is that our Saviour doth not in this place oppose the abiding or remaining of the Holy Ghost, to his own discession or departure from the hearts or souls of men, into which he is entered or come, but to his departure out of the world by death, which was now at hand. Therefore,

2. By the abiding of the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, with them for ever, he doth not mean his perpetual or uninterruptible residence or abode in their hearts or souls, or in the heart or soul of any other particular man determinately, but his constant abiding in the world, in and with the gospel, and the children thereof, until the consummation and end of it. In respect of which permanency of his Spirit, with them and their spiritual successors or posterity, he saith of himself elsewhere, “And, lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world,” Matt, 28:20. And to put our Saviour’s meaning in the words in hand, into words of more plainness, it was as if he should have said to his disciples thus: The counsel and purpose of my Father, in sending me into the world, required that I should make no long stay or abode in it, hut that I should return by the way of death again unto him, after a season; and accordingly I am now upon my return, and so must leave you: but when I shall have finished my return unto my Father, and am come to him, I will intercede for you, and he will send you another Comforter, the Holy Ghost, upon better

terms, for staying and continuing with you, than those on which I came: for he shall be sent, not to be taken out of the world by death, as I must be, but to make his residence with and amongst you, my friends and faithful ones, for ever. This to be our Saviour's express drift and scope, in the words, appears by the carriage of the greatest part of the chapter. Now from such an abiding of the Holy Ghost with them as this, cannot be inferred his perpetual abiding with any one person or believer, determinately, much less with every one.

3. This promise concerning the abiding of this other Comforter for ever, must be conceived to be made, either to the apostles, personally considered, or else to the whole body of the church, of which they were principal members. If the first of these be admitted, then it will not follow, that because the apostles had the perpetual residency of the Spirit with them and in them; therefore every particular believer hath the like, no more, than it will follow, that because the apostles were infallible in their judgments and doctrine, through the teachings of the Spirit in them; therefore every believer is infallible upon the same account also. If the latter be admitted, neither will it follow, that every believer, or every member of the church, must needs have the residence of the Spirit with him for ever. There are privileges appropriate to corporations or bodies politic, which every particular member of these bodies cannot claim. The church may have the residence or presence of the Spirit of God with her for ever; and yet every present member hereof lose his present interest and part in him. Yea, that the abiding for ever of the Spirit in the apostles themselves, was not absolutely promised unto them, appears from those and such like passages of our Saviour unto them. "If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall *abide* in my love," &c. John 15:10. "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and will *dwell* with him," John 14:28.

4, and lastly, Notice hath been taken and given formerly, that this particle *iva*, ut, "that," doth not always import the certainty of the thing spoken of, by way of event, no, not when speech is of God himself, but oft-times the intention only of the agent, see Chap. 10. pp. 292, 306. In this dialect of speech those words, "That he may abide with you for ever," do not imply an absolute necessity of his abiding with them for ever, but only that that should be the intent of him that should send him, and that he would send him in such a way, or upon such terms, that if they were

true to their own interest in so weighty a matter, and proportionably careful, they might retain him, and have his presence and abode with them for ever. Turn the words any way with any tolerable congruity, either to the scope of the place, manner of Scripture expression, or principles of reason, and the doctrine of perseverance, which we implead, will be found to have nothing in them.

As for such passages as these, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,” &c., John. 24; and again, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” John 3:36; and, “He that eateth me shall live by me,” John 6:57, with many others of like import, enough, and that with advantage, hath been said already, to evince them innocent from all compliance with the common doctrine, heterodoxly surnamed orthodox, of perseverance. These indeed are all promises of eternal life unto those that believe, but that the condition of perseverance rules, though invisibly, in them all, but is itself absolutely promised in none, clearly appears by what hath been already argued from the Scriptures, and might easily be made to appear yet further by the consideration of all those Scripture texts wherein salvation is suspended upon perseverance, and perseverance upon the watchfulness and diligence of men. But it is like we shall have better occasion to survey such texts as these hereafter. We have now done with the first argument of our opponents in the present controversy. Their second is built upon such texts which affirm and teach that God will, according to his promise, so preserve and keep all true believers, that none of them shall ever fall away from their faith, either totally or finally. Let us hearken to what they bring forth upon this account. From the apostle Paul they burnish themselves with such sayings as these: “Who,” speaking of Jesus Christ, “shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called,” &c. 1 Cor. 1:8, 9. Again: “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil,” &c. 2 Thess. 3:3. That neither of these Scriptures, nor any of like character, hath any communion with that doctrine of perseverance which hath been disowned hitherto, hath been sufficiently proved already, where the passages themselves were briefly opened, and a clear sense rendered, wherein God, according to Scripture phrase, may be said to establish and confirm men unto the end, though these men be neither

actually or with effect established nor confirmed thereunto. The Scripture frequently attributes actions, events, or effects, where means or endeavours are or have been used, or attempts made, yea, and when intentions only have been entertained in order to the acting or effecting such things; yea, and sometimes where occasion only hath been administered for the effecting of them. Instances have been given formerly of all these kinds of expression in the Scripture. So that God may properly enough, as the Scripture counts propriety, be said to establish or confirm believers unto the end, when he vouchsafeth unto them means sufficient, both inward and outward, for their establishment and confirmation in this kind; or when he doth that which is proper and fitting for him to do for and towards the procuring and effecting the one and the other. Now God may do all this, and yet men neither be completely, and to salvation, established nor confirmed unto the end, through their own negligence and carelessness to comport with the grace of God towards them in this behalf, and to do that which is required on their part towards the working out of their salvation. And,

2. That the apostle in neither of these places doth undertake or affirm that God will establish or confirm them unto the end, after any such manner, or in any such sense, but that they may possibly miscarry notwithstanding, appears from the context itself, where the latter of them stands. For having comforted them with the words mentioned, ver. 3, “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil,” 2 Thess. 3:3, and professed, ver. 4, a “confidence (i. e. a confident hope) in the Lord touching them,” that “they both did and would do the things which he commanded them ;” which, by the way, had been a very weak saying, if he had known that they must of necessity do them, and could not choose to do otherwise; ver. 5, he lifteth up this prayer for them: “And the Lord (or, now the Lord) direct your hearts into (or, unto, εἰς) the love of God, and into (or, unto) a patient waiting for Christ.” Doubtless, had he first absolutely promised unto them such an establishment and keeping from evil by God, the saving success or event whereof had no ways depended upon them, nor upon any such comportment on their part with it, which they might possibly have neglected or refused, he would not so immediately have conceived such a prayer for them as we heard, viz. that “God would direct their hearts into (unto or towards, as the preposition ὑπὲρ might very well be translated) the love of God,” &c. It

is of no good consistence, that a man should first absolutely and confidently affirm that such or such a thing should or would be done by God against all opposition whatsoever, and then presently pray unto God that he would direct the hearts of men to such a course, upon their walking wherein the event or coming to pass of the thing so promised depended; especially considering, that a directing of the hearts of men into or towards such a course or way, doth not necessarily suppose that therefore they will, or of necessity must, walk in them. Therefore, certainly, that stablishment and keeping from evil which the apostle, in the place in hand, promiseth unto them, imports nothing else but his willingness and readiness at all times to furnish and follow them with such means of grace, which would be proper and abundantly sufficient to stablish them and to keep them from evil, yea, and which would actually stablish and keep them from evil, if they proved not extremely negligent and unfaithful to their own souls in despising them. Therefore,

3. Whereas the apostle, in both places, mentioneth the faithfulness of God, “God is faithful by whom ye were called,” &c. as that Divine principle in him, or attribute, out of which he is moved to establish and confirm them unto the end, and so to keep them from evil; by faithfulness, he doth not necessarily mean that property or attribute in him which renders him true and just, or constant in the performance of his promises, (I mean, of his promises properly and commonly so called, and which are exhibited in words,) as if the apostle in these, or any the like places, supposed such a promise, one or more, made by him, by which he stands obliged to stablish or confirm his saints unto the end, by a strong and irresistible hand; but such a kind of faithfulness or disposition in him as that meant by Peter, when he styleth him “a faithful Creator,” 1 Pet. 4:19. Now God, as we formerly showed, is, and may properly be termed, “a faithful Creator,” because he constantly performs unto his creature whatsoever the law or relation of a Creator promiseth in an equitable and rational way unto it, which we there signified to be a great care, tenderness, and love towards it, for the preservation and well-being of it, according to the nature and condition of every creature respectively. In like manner he may be, yea, it is most likely that he is, called faithful, in his calling of men, (“God is faithful by whom ye were called,”) *i. e.* as he is a spiritual Father, or Creator, a giver of a new and more excellent being unto men, because he never faileth to perform unto

these new creatures of his whatsoever such a being as this, regularly interpreted, promiseth unto him who receiveth it, from him who is the donor or collator of it; *i. e.* convenient and sufficient means for the preservation and well-being of it. “Eadem est causa procreans et conservans,” saith the natural philosopher. So that the faithfulness of God, in the Scriptures in hand, supposeth no such promise made by God as our opposers imagine, as, *viz.* whereby he should in terms or words stand engaged to stablish, confirm, or keep from evil, his new creatures, his regenerate ones, after any such manner but that they, if they be careless and negligent of themselves, may be shaken, decline, and commit evil, notwithstanding.

4, and lastly for this, By the tenor of other passages from the same apostle’s pen, and upon like occasion, where he expresseth the care and diligence of the saints themselves to co-operate and join with God and his grace, by way of condition, to their establishment to the end, it fully appears that all such promises, which are made by him concerning such establishment, are conditional, and that the full and complete performance of them, is suspended upon the said voluntary conjunction or co-operation of the saints themselves with him. Such passages as we now hint, are these: “And you which were in times past strangers and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,” &c. Col. 1:21-23.

So again: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,” &c. Heb. 3:14. So that there is no such promise of perseverance unto the end made by God unto the saints, but what they may possibly be disinherited of by their own slothfulness and unworthiness.

Another piece of Scripture by which the argument, now shaking, is supposedly strengthened, is that of the apostle: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,” 1 Cor. 10:13. I answer,

1. That this Scripture notably confirms the interpretation and

explication lately given, of the faithfulness of God, wherever it is asserted upon the occasion mentioned, which is manifest enough in the words now before us, viz. that it signifies or imports such a carefulness pr respectfulness in him towards Ms saints, which answers the nature and terms of such a relation that accrueth unto Mm, by making himself the founder, father, or author of this new being of saintship unto them, and withal, which answereth the nature and condition of such creatures or persons. Now such a love or respectfulness in God towards the persons we speak *a*, which expresseth itself in vouchsafing unto them a liberal and bountiful sufficiency of means, for and towards the perpetual preservation of themselves in well-being, fully answers both the nature and import of the said relation, as also the frame and condition of these new creatures; with whose frame, or state and manner of being, viz. as they are men, it well consists that they should have all things requisite and necessary for their happiness and well-being, both present and future, supplied unto them by God, but not to he simply and absolutely, or by a forcible and strong hand, necessitated to use them in order hereunto. And accordingly the Holy Ghost in the words before us expressly testifieth on the behalf of God, that he will not suffer the saints to be tempted above what they are *able*, *i. e.* that he will afford them a sufficiency of means or strength to stand it out against all temptations whatsoever, that shall be permitted by him to befall them; not that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they shall be willing, (to overcome or keep themselves upright under) nor that he will not suffer them to be overcome. Nor is this sense or notion of God's faithfulness any whit differing from what Mr. Calvin himself conceiveth upon the place. "The apostle," saith he, "calleth God faithful, not only because he is true in his promises ; but it is as if he should say, the Lord is a certain keeper of those that are his, under whose tuition you are in safety: for he never leaveth Ms destitute. Therefore when he hath once received you into his care or trust, there is no cause why ye should fear, *in case you depend wholly on him.*" So that he promiseth no absolute safety or security unto the saints upon God's faithfulness, but only conditional, viz., if they shall wholly depend on him. Therefore,

2. For those words, "But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," they do not imply that God will make such a way for their escape from under temptation, that they shall

and must necessarily bear it, (viz. without falling under it, or miscarrying by it,) but that they may be *able* to bear it, (without suffering any such loss or misery by it,) and make an escape from under it in due time. This exposition of the place is confirmed by our English divines themselves in their annotations upon it. Common or incident to man, *i. e.*, say they, “such as usually befalleth men, even God’s dearest children, or such as *may* be borne by man in this life especially, assisted by God’s grace, which is always *sufficient* for God’s children.” That which is always sufficient is not necessarily at any time efficient as to the actual production of that for which it sufficeth; and that which *may* be borne by a man without inconvenience, *may* also possibly be an occasion of evil unto him.

3, and lastly, The exhortation or declaration immediately following, “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry,” plainly sheweth that there is no absolute promise from God concerning their safe bringing off from their temptation intended by the apostle in the words in hand. The mention or assertion of such a promise is no proper motive to that duty which he requires of them in that exhortation, but rather a temptation from it.

Another place insisted upon, upon the last-mentioned account, presenteth itself in these words: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Thess. 5:23. I answer,

1. These words suppose no promise, much less any absolute promise, made by God to preserve their spirit, soul, or body blameless; but only contain a prayer or holy desire conceived by the apostle for such a gracious vouchsafement from God unto them, which rather proveth that such a preservation might possibly have been withheld or denied by God unto them than the contrary; for those things are more likely to be sought by prayer, which may possibly not be granted or obtained otherwise, than such which might with the greatest confidence be expected upon another account and without such prayer. And besides, what efficacy or prevalency with God can be ascribed unto such a prayer which seeketh such things at his hand to the exhibition whereof he stands absolutely engaged by promise, purpose, or the like, and which should have been exhibited and given by him, whether such prayer had been made unto



him or no ?

2. The same thing, in effect, which the apostle here prayeth that God would do for the Thessalonians, in other places he exhorteth men themselves to do : which plainly showeth that the intent and purport of the apostle's prayer in this place, was not that he would, by a peremptory and irresistible hand, preserve them blameless, &c., (which is his manner of acting in the performance of all his absolute promises,) but that he would afford unto them such gracious excitements, quickenings, and enlargements of heart and spirit, by his Spirit, whereby they might be effectually provoked and engaged to put forth themselves to do what was requisite on their parts, for, and towards, such an actual preserving of themselves; which, notwithstanding, he clearly supposeth, in the passages immediately subjoined, that they very possibly might not do, even under such excitements and enlargements. "I give thee charge," saith this apostle to Timothy, "in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Tim. 6:13, 14. So also Peter to his proselytes, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, *be diligent*, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," 2 Pet. 3:14; wherein that very possibly they might miscarry, appears yet further from these words, not long after, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness," 2 Pet. 3:17.

3. If it shall be supposed, that the apostle in the passage in hand any way supposed a certainty, or necessity, in respect of any absolute promise or decree, that God would, actually and with success, preserve them blameless, &c., he should clearly destroy, or at least much shake and weaken, what he had built up in all his preceding exhortations and admonitions; the joint tendency of them all being this, to "preserve them blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." For to inform, or insinuate unto such men, whom we have most seriously admonished and exhorted to be studious and careful of doing such and such things, that so they may be blameless unto the coming of Christ, that they shall certainly, and without any possibility of miscarrying, be preserved by God blameless hereunto, is nothing else, being truly interpreted, but to tempt them to neglect all our admonitions and exhortations in that behalf. Nor

do the words following, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," 1 Thess. 5:24, imply any such thing; but only this, that God was, and would be, careful and tender over them, in preserving them blameless, &c., so far as his interest lieth, or is any ways meet for him to interpose, act, or assist, in or towards such their preservation. This sense we have formerly asserted unto like passages and expressions, in this chapter. To heal the offence of such explications, or limitations, as these, as far as his interest lieth, as far as is proper, or appertained unto him to do, with the like, when the doing or performance of such things is attributed unto God, wherein men also are to join and act with him, I shall here add,

1. That such explications or limitations as these, in the said cases, and others of like consideration, are frequently used, both by the ancient fathers, and by our late divines also, even such as are supposed our greatest adversaries in the present controversies. "Therefore," saith Austin, speaking of Christ's coming to save the world, "*as much as lieth in the physician*, he came to [save, or] heal the sick. He slayeth himself, who will not observe the precepts of the physician." So Chrysostom, — "For what," saith he, "if all men do not believe, yet *he hath done his part*" or fully performed that which was proper for him to do. And elsewhere, — "For although Christ was not like to win," or gain, "all men, yet did he die for all men: *So fulfilling that which was proper for him*," or which appertained to him. "Yea, *as much as in them lieth*," saith Calvin, speaking of wicked apostates, "they profane and abrogate the inviolable covenant of God, ratified by the blood of Christ." Piscator also, in a like case, useth the same explication. "Thy weak brother shall perish, viz.," saith he, "*as to thee*, or as much as in thee lieth." Our English divines make use of the same explicatory expression in their annotations upon the same place.

2. Upon the same account I add this further; that there is very good reason for such attribution?, as we now speak of, whether unto God, or men, or any other efficient cause; I mean, why such effects should be ascribed unto them, towards the production whereof they contribute any considerable degree of efficiency, whether the said effects be ever actually produced, or no; viz., because they do as much, and altogether the same, in such a case of a non-production of the effect, as they should do in a case of an actual production; and the reason of the non-attainment, or nonproduction of the effect, resteth not at all in them, but in some other

cause, one, or more, which should have contributed their efficiency or strength likewise, towards the same production, but did not. As for example: suppose four or five horses yoked in a team, and that one or two of these should pull or draw lustily, yet because the rest are jadish and lazy, and will not put their shoulders to it, the wain, being heavy laden, sticks fast in the slough, and is not drawn out; in this case, because the horses supposed to pull stoutly do as much for their parts as was requisite for them to do towards the drawing of it out, and that which would actually have drawn it out, in case their fellows had joined, as they ought and might, in the same act of drawing with them, there is no reason why they should lose the credit or commendation of their activity, through the jadishness of their fellows, nor, consequently, why they should not be said to have drawn the wain out of the mire. In like manner, when God contributes his efficiency towards the keeping of men blameless, and that such an efficiency, which, being seconded and complied with by them, according to their duties and abilities for the action, would actually produce the effect, and keep them blameless indeed, there is no reason why he should be deprived of the honour of his action because men are slothful, and will not act with him; and, consequently, why he should not be said to keep them blameless, how blameworthy in the meantime soever they be, through their own default. For of the two it is a more honourable expression, to say that a man did such or such a worthy action, than that he did somewhat towards it. And forasmuch as, 1. God doth no more towards the keeping of those saints of his blameless, who are actually and indeed kept blameless, than he either doth or is ready to do in a regular way, towards the keeping of others of them blameless, who yet miscarry: and, 2. Considering, that when any of the saints are actually kept blameless through that gracious supply of his Spirit, and other means vouchsafed by him in order thereunto, though not without their own care and concurrence with him herein, the honour of this action, or keeping blameless, is most properly due unto him; there is no reason why it should not be ascribed unto him in the former case, as well as in the latter, or that he should not be as well said to keep those blameless, who, only through their own unworthiness, prove blameworthy, as those who, through his grace, attended with their own endeavours, are kept blameless. It is a saying approved, I suppose, on all hands,

**Success in his attempts I wish him none,  
Who by the event will judge an action.**

Therefore when God acteth uniformly in a way of grace, he is uniformly to be honoured, what deformity soever there be found in the event, issue, or consequent of his action.

5, and lastly, The words in hand cannot be judged promissory, or to suppose a promise, because then it would follow, that God should stand engaged by a promise to preserve believers, not only from total and final apostasy, hut from all partial and temporary declinings also. For they that are sanctified wholly, or throughout, and whose whole spirit, and soul, and body are preserved blameless, &c., are, in the same sense, preserved from all, and all manner of declining.

The last piece of Scripture frequently called upon for support of this second argument, answereth in these words, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” Philip. 1:6. This text is of the same interpretation with the former; only it hath not so much of the letter, or face, as some of them have, for an absolute promise from God unto the saints, that he will cause them to persevere. For,

1. That confidence, or persuasion rather, GREEK, which the apostle here professeth, is not said nor insinuated, to be built upon any promise, much less upon any absolute promise of God to interpose after any such manner for their perseverance, that it should not be possible for them to decline or not to persevere: hut upon a charitable or equitable apprehension he had of the ingenuous integrity, and simplicity of their hearts towards Christ, his saints, and gospel; which kind of temper or frame of spirit in men, is of all others most promising of perseverance in well doing through the grace of God; and, consequently, of the continuation of this grace unto men, inasmuch as, according to the common saying of divines, “Deus non deserit, nisi deserentem,” God forsakes no man, but those who forsake him first. That such an apprehension of the holy ingenuity and uprightness of their hearts, as we speak of, in conjunction with that gracious principle or disposition in God now hinted, was the ground of that good persuasion, which he here expresseth, most evidently appeareth from the words immediately following: “Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, (viz., that he

who hath begun a good work in you will perform it, &c.) because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace,” Philip, 1:7. Therefore it was the present goodness or honesty of their hearts, expressed by their willingness to partake of the afflictions of the gospel, and of the saints, not any promise of God, which was the ground of that persuasion in him which he here mentioneth.

2. Had he had any absolute promise of God for the ground of that his persuasion, doubtless he would not have expressed himself with so much tenderness, and wariness, as to say, “Even as it is meet for me to think,” &c. The promises of God would have taught Paul to speak at another manner of rate of confidence, than so.

3, and lastly, Had he here given unto these Philippians any absolute assurance of God’s performing the good work begun in them, until the day, &c., or such which might have satisfied, or made them confident, that the good work he speaks of should have been continued and perfected by God, without all interposal, or means to be used on their part; he had laid a very slippery foundation to build all those exhortations upon, which with much earnestness he presseth upon them in the sequel of his epistle ; and more particularly these, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ,—that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel,” &c., Philip, 1:27. And again, “Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” &c. Philip, 2:12. Hope or confidence of obtaining, by and upon the means to obtain, is a spur unto action; but hope and confidence of obtaining, whether any means be used or no, is a temptation unto sloth.

Nor do our reformed expositors of best account interpret the place in hand concerning any certainty that the apostle had of the perpetual continuance of the grace of God with them, but only of a charitable or humane persuasion hereof. “But wheresoever,” saith Calvin upon the place, “we see any such signs of a Divine election, which we are capable to apprehend, it becometh us to be presently stirred up to a good hope, as well for this end, that we be not evil minded towards our neighbours, or defraud them of an equitable and humane judgment of charity, as that we may be thankful unto God.” Musculus, yet somewhat more fully, “God

indeed,” saith he, “had begun a good work in the Philippians, but from whence was the apostle certain that he would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ? I answer, he doth not say I am certain, but I am persuaded: it is one thing to be certain of a matter, another to be persuaded. A certainty of God’s works may be had out of his word, but a persuasion (may be had) from a good belief or reliance upon his goodness, and from some arguments of such his works. Certainty deceives no man, but a man’s persuasion often falls out otherwise than was hoped.”

A third argument laid hold on, for the service of the doctrine of perseverance, is founded upon the immutable decree of election from eternity; and operates after this manner. A living or saving faith is given to none, but to those that are elect, in which respect, such a faith is called “The faith of the elect of God,” Titus 1:1. And God hath determined to bring his elect to salvation by faith, with the greatest certainty that can be. From hence then it follows, either that the elect must be brought to salvation by faith with so much certainty, that they shall never fall away from it, either totally or finally, or that God is changeable in his counsel. But this latter is at no hand to be admitted: therefore the former must stand. To this I answer,

1. That this argument demands that which is sacrilegious to grant, viz. that God hath from eternity elected a certain number of men personally, and, as it were, by name considered, unto salvation, whom he purposeth to bring thereunto infallibly and without all possibility of miscarrying. The inconsistency of this notion or conceit with the nature and attributes of God hath been already intimated; and the inconsistency of it with the main current of the Scriptures, reason, and truth itself, shall, with God’s assistance, be demonstrated at large in the second part of this work. In the mean time, to the argument in hand, in respect of other particulars in it, we answer,

2. That by “the faith of God’s elect,” Titus 1:1, is not meant such a faith as he gives unto men elected unto salvation under a mere personal consideration from eternity, which are a kind of men allied to Paracelsus’s non-Adami, but the doctrine of the gospel which Paul was to preach to the saints and the chosen ones of God. The carriage of the whole sentence evinceth this:

“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after

godliness meaning, that he served God and performed the office of an apostle of Christ according to the exigency and requirement of that doctrine which God had now revealed and sent into the world to be preached unto his saints, every where termed his “chosen ones,” as likewise according to the “acknowledgment of the truth which is,” &c.; meaning, that he did not only serve God and Jesus Christ in preaching the gospel unto the saints and persons already called and gained into the faith, as became him, and as the nature of the gospel required of him in this behalf, but that he was faithful and serviceable also unto them in preaching it unto such as were yet infidels and unconverted, upon such terms that they also might be brought to the acknowledgment of it. That which in the former clause he calls “the faith of God’s elect,” in the latter he calls “the truth which is after godliness meaning, in both, the doctrine of the gospel, which in twenty places besides, especially in the writings of this apostle, by a kind of metonymy, where the object is put for the act, is called “faith.

“It was needful,” saith Jude, “for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” Jude, ver. 3. Peruse Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Phil. 1:27; Gal. 3:2, 5, &c. There is one place, amongst the rest, of like construction with this in hand, and that within two or three verses of it, where the apostle calleth Titus his “natural son,” or a “natural son after the common faith,” or according” (as it is the same preposition, GREEK,) “to the common faith meaning, that he was a genuine and true saint or son of God, and of his, as an instrument of his spiritual being, according to all those holy qualifications which the gospel now commonly preached and known in the world requireth of those whom it owneth or adjudgeth for sons. The preposition GREEK is frequently used in such a construction or sense as this: “But if for meat thy brother be made sorrowful, now walkest thou not” GREEK, “according to charity,” Rom. 14:15; *i. e.* according to the exigency of charity, or as charity requireth. So, GREEK, “according to his works,” Rom. 2:6; *i. e.* according to the exigency of his works, or as his works require. To pass by other instances without number, in the latter end of the verse in hand, “the truth which is” GREEK, “according unto godliness, is a kind of periphrasis or description of the gospel as being such a truth, which godliness, as it were, requireth for her promotion and advancement in the world.

3. If, by “the faith of God’s elect,” we shall understand either the grace of faith given unto the elect of God, or the act of believing wrought in the elect of God, we shall make no good consistency of sense in the sentence: for if Paul should style himself “the servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ according to the” grace of “faith,” or act of believing, in the “elect of God,” what can we reasonably imagine his meaning should he? Verily I understand not. Or, if there could be any commodious or tolerable sense made with such a construction of the word “faith,” yet, by “the elect of God,” we need not understand the generality of the saints, much less such as are supposed to have been chosen unto salvation by God from eternity, (of which number there are always some, as our adversaries themselves confess, unconverted, and consequently that have no such faith as is here pretended,) but the excellent ones, as David calleth them, among the saints, whose faith is most signal and glorious. It is a frequent Hebraism in the Scriptures, to call both things and persons of special worth and excellency in their kind, “elect,” or chosen. See 1 Sam. 26:2; Isa. 22:7; Jer. 22:7. In this sense the Messiah was notioned and termed among the Jews, GREEK, “the elect of God,” Luke 23:35; and Christ himself is called a “corner-stone, elect and precious,” 1 Pet. 2:4. So Paul, “a chosen” or elect “vessel,” &c.

4. Nor do I know any ground, either in Scripture or good reason, why, by “God’s elect,” we should understand persons under a personal consideration segregated or chosen by God from amongst other men to be infallibly conveyed by faith unto salvation. The Scripture knoweth no such sense or signification of the words as this: nor can it be proved from hence, nor otherwise, that men are in any other sense chosen or said to be chosen from eternity, but only as that law or decree of God, by virtue whereof men come to be elected in time, was from eternity. The tenor of God’s law or decree of election, which was from eternity, is, as the Scripture evinceth, this, or the like: Whosoever shall believe in my Son, Jesus Christ, whom I purpose to send into the world, shall hereupon become a man of that species, sort, or kind of men whom I have chosen from amongst all other men or sorts of men in the world, and designed for salvation. For that men cannot, in propriety of speech, be said to be elected from eternity, is evident, because they were not, had no being from eternity, nothing having been from eternity but God himself alone. Now, that which is not, cannot be said, unless haply it be in some



improper and bysense, to be elected or to be the object of any act or action whatsoever. And as men are properly said to be justified in time, as viz. when they believe, though the decree of justification, by virtue whereof they come to be justified in time, was from eternity; in like manner, though the decree of election, by virtue whereof men come to be elected, was from eternity, yet it brings forth in time, and, in propriety of speech, men cannot be said to be elected but in time. But concerning election from eternity, as somewhat hath occasionally been spoken already, so much more remains to be spoken in due place.

5, and lastly, Nor is there truth in this assertion, in the argument, God hath determined to bring his elect unto salvation by faith, with the greatest certainty that can be. God hath indeed determined with the greatest certainty that can be, to bring his elect to salvation by faith (persevered in, or if persevered in,) but this is not to determine to bring them to salvation with the greatest certainty that can be by faith simply, or by faith, whether persevered in or no. So that the whole frame of this argument is crazy and loose; scarce is there a sound part in the whole body of it.

A fourth argument for the countenance of the said doctrine of perseverance, is taken from the intercession of Christ, and pleadeth thus: Whatsoever Christ prayeth for unto the Father, shall certainly be granted unto him and done ; but Christ prayeth for the perseverance of all true believers, as appears by his praying for Peter in this kind, Luke 12:32 ; ergo. I answer,

1. To the major proposition, by granting it, rightly understood, and with some explication as this: Whatsoever Christ prayeth for unto the Father, shall certainly be done, viz. so, or after such a manner, and upon such terms, as Christ in his prayer intendeth, not simply or absolutely, as the words of the prayer may sometimes seem to some to import. Hanging upon the cross he prayed for his enemies, and those that crucified him, that they might be forgiven, Luke 23:34. May it not be as well inferred from hence, that therefore all his enemies, and all such who in any sense crucify him, shall be forgiven by God, as it is argued from his praying for Peter that his faith might not fail, that the faith of no true believer shall fail? Dr. Twiss's notion upon the case is not so authentic, and though admitted will not heal the difficulty. "Christ," saith he, "prayed for his enemies, *ex officio hominis privati*, *i. e.* according to the duty of a private

man; but for his elect, as a Mediator.” This is said, but not proved, nor, indeed, probable; for very unlikely it is that Christ, being, now in a full investiture of his great office of Mediator, should wave his interest in heaven by means hereof in his addressments unto God for men, and pray only in the capacity and according to the interest and duty of a private man. This would argue that he prayed not for them with his whole heart, nor with an effectualness of desire to obtain what he prayed for. But let it be granted, yet still it follows that whatsoever Christ prayed for, was not simply or absolutely granted or done; and if whatsoever Christ prayed for was absolutely granted, it is not material, as to matter of impetration, whether he prayed as Mediator or as a private man. But the intent of Christ’s prayer for those who crucified him was not that all their sins should be forgiven them, much less that simply and absolutely, *i. e.* without any intervening of faith or repentance, they should be forgiven, which had been to pray for that which is expressly contrary to the revealed will of God, but that that particular sin of their crucifying him should be forgiven them, *i. e.* should not be imputed unto them by way of bar to their repentance, either by any sudden or speedy destruction, or by a delivering of them up to such a spirit of obstinacy or obduration under which men seldom or never repent ; which was also the sense of Stephen’s prayer for those who stoned him: GREEK: “ lay not this sin to their charge,” Acts 7:60. So from Christ’s prayer for all those that should believe in him, that they might all be one, as the Father and he were one, and as the Father was in him, and he in the Father, John 17:21, 22, it cannot be concluded that therefore there should never fall out any difference in judgment, any disunion in affection between the saints, because there is neither between him and the Father; the intent of this prayer being only this, that God would vouchsafe gracious and plentiful means unto them, as well for the uniting of them in judgment as affection; not that he would necessitate or compel them into either of these unions, either by such means or without. So again, when he prayeth to the Father to keep his disciples from evil, John 17:15, it cannot be gathered that therefore they never sinned or never did that which was evil; or, if it be to be understood of the evil of suffering, as some conceive, that they never suffered. Therefore,

2. To the Scripture cited for proof of the said proposition, “And I know that thou hearest me always,” John 11:42, I answer, that the clear sense of

these words is, that Christ knew, and doubted not but that God the Father, perfectly knowing the secret of his heart and soul in every prayer that he made unto him, had formerly and would still accordingly answer him, and gratify him in every thing according to the true intention of his prayer. He knew that what he prayed for absolutely, God the Father would absolutely grant and do; and what he prayed for with or under a reserve, exception, or condition, that he would grant and do where and as far as such a reserve, exception, or condition did not take place and interpose. Whensoever he prayed for the Father's concurrence with him to work miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine, he prayed absolutely, and consequently was heard absolutely : the matter and letter of his prayer was never denied unto him in such cases; but when he prayed that the cup, which he afterwards drank, might pass by him without his drinking it, though he prayed thrice, and that very earnestly, as the text saith, yet because he prayed this prayer with a reservation, desiring what he prayed for only conditionally, and with submission to his Father's will and the great exigency of mankind, these standing in opposition to what he prayed for, it was not granted unto him. Now, certain it is, that Christ never prayed for the absolute perseverance of believers in their faith; yea, it is no ways likely that he would have prayed for it as he did, I mean with so much seriousness and affectionateness of spirit, if God had absolutely decreed the giving of it unto them whether he had prayed for it or no. Therefore,

3, and lastly, Concerning his praying for Peter, that his faith might not fail, which is all the strength of the minor proposition, I answer,

3.1. That from hence it apparently followeth, that therefore Peter's faith was in danger of failing, or might have failed, had not Christ interceded for him: and consequently, that God had not absolutely decreed the perseverance or non-failing of Peter's faith, or of the faith of any other man; otherwise, what efficacy can we ascribe to the prayer of Christ for Peter's faith? or how can it be known upon what account Peter's faith was preserved; whether that of Christ's prayer or that of God's decree, for the non-failing of it.

3.2. Neither can it be proved that Christ prayed that Peter's faith might never fail totally, but only, if so much, that it might not fail upon that particular and sore temptation which he knew would soon after come upon him. It is evident from the context that this was all, if not more than

all, that Christ prayed for on the behalf of Peter's faith : "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31, 32. Now then, to infer from Christ's prayer that Peter's faith might not fail by or under a particular temptation, that therefore it could or should never fail, is a strain of no better logic than it would be to conclude that those who were with Paul in the ship never died, because God made a promise unto Paul that he would give their lives unto him as for that voyage, Acts 27:24.

3.3. If it be by the virtue and efficacy of Christ's prayer for Peter's faith, that the faith of true believers can never fail, then was the faith of all true believers, before this prayer made by Christ, obnoxious unto a failing. If this, then neither was there nor is there any peremptory decree of God concerning the non-failing of the faith of believers. If so, then is there a possibility that their faith may fail; for whatsoever is possible in respect of the nature of the thing, and of second causes sufficient to produce it, may very possibly come to pass, where no decree of God to the contrary obstructeth the possibility. Now, our adversaries themselves acknowledge that the faith of true believers is in itself failable, and, in respect of several causes destructive to it, might perish.

3.4. Nor is it so clear from the tenor of Christ's prayer, intimated by him, that he prayed against the total failing of Peter's faith under the said temptation, much less against the final failing of it afterwards; but most likely it is that what he prayed for was only this, that Peter's yielding to the temptation, or his being overcome by it, might not extinguish his faith upon any such terms, but that he might and should afterwards recover it by repentance. If this were that which Christ prayed for on his behalf, then might his faith fail totally under the temptation, (as Ambrose, amongst the fathers, conceiveth that he did,) notwithstanding Christ's prayer, though not finally; and that Peter's faith did indeed fail totally by the force of the temptation seems very probable, at least, from these words of Christ to him, "When thou art *converted*, strengthen," &c. Men are not said to be *converted* a gradu ad gradum, sed a specie ad speciem; *i. e.* from a lesser degree of faith to a greater, but from unbelief unto faith. And besides, that Peter, upon his denial of Christ, was, until his repentance, in the state and condition of those who shall be denied by Christ at the great day,

which could not be under any degree of true faith remaining in him, is evident from that general and express intermination of Christ, Matt. 10:33, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

3.5, and lastly, Whatsoever the intent or subject-matter of Christ's prayer for Peter was, evident it is, that as his temptation, with an eye whereunto this prayer was made for him by Christ, was singular and particular, so was Christ's prayer also for him; and a man may as well from Peter's temptation argue that all true believers shall be tempted after the same manner and to the same degree, as from Christ's prayer for Peter that his faith might not fail, conclude that the faith of no true believer shall fail. So, likewise, from Christ's looking back upon Peter, to provoke him the more effectually to repentance, as good an argument as that now under contest may be framed to prove that Christ will visibly look upon all true believers when they sin, to provoke them to repentance. It is in the case of Christ's prayer as it is of his precepts: when he commands any thing upon a particular occasion or ground, the obliging force of the command is to be extended no further than where the same or like occasion and ground take place; and intimation hath been given formerly, that the apostles, in respect of that great and extraordinary service of carrying the name of Jesus Christ up and down the world, so full of enmity and opposition to it, had many prerogative favours vouchsafed unto them by Christ, wherein the generality of believers, having no such engagement lying upon them, have no ground or reason to expect an equality or share with them: therefore there is nothing of any value in Christ's praying for Peter's faith to support the falling cause of the common doctrine of perseverance.

A fifth argument advanced in defence of the same doctrine is drawn from the intercession of Christ at the right hand of God for his saints, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" &c., Rom. 8:34, 35. So again, "Christ is entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. 9:24; and, "since he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. 7:25. From hence it is thus argued: If those for whom Christ intercedes at the right hand of God may fall away from their faith so as to perish notwithstanding, then is the intercession of Christ ineffectual and insufficient to preserve them. But the intercession of Christ is not ineffectual, &c. Ergo. To this I answer,

1. It is nowhere affirmed that Christ intercedes for the perseverance of the

saints in their faith, or that they who once believe should never cease believing, how sinful and wicked soever they shall prove afterwards; but Christ intercedes for his saints, viz. as such, and as continuing such, that no accusation from any hand whatsoever may be heard against them,—that no afflictions or sufferings which they meet with in the world may cause any alienation or abatement in the love of God towards them, but that God will preserve and protect them under them, &c., and consequently, that they may be maintained at an excellent rate of consolation in every estate and condition against all interposures of any creature whatsoever to the contrary. This to be the tenor and effect of Christ's intercession for his saints is evident from the first of the three passages cited; and for that demand, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" it is not meant of separating us from that love wherewith we love Christ, but from that love wherewith Christ loveth us, viz. as we are saints, and abide in his love by keeping his commandments, John 15:10. Neither is it to be so conceived as if sin, wickedness, looseness, profaneness, &c., could not unsaint men, and hereby separate them from the love wherewith Christ sometimes loved them, (for that iniquity will separate between men and their God is evident from Isa. 59:2;) but the clear meaning is, that nothing, no creature whatsoever, person or thing, can make Christ an enemy unto those who shall in faith and love cleave fast unto him.

2. Were it granted that part of Christ's intercession for his saints is that their faith may never fail, yet the meaning hereof would not necessarily, nor indeed with any competent probability, be this—that no sin or wickedness whatsoever that shall or can be perpetrated by them might cause them to make shipwreck of their faith; but rather that God would graciously vouchsafe such means, and such a presence of his Spirit unto them, whereby they may be richly enabled to keep themselves, in faith and a good conscience unto the end. If Christ should simply and absolutely intercede that no sin or wickedness whatsoever may destroy the faith of any true believer, and consequently deprive him of salvation, should he not hereby become that which the apostle rejects with indignation as altogether unworthy of him, I mean, a "minister of sin? "Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid," Gal. 2:17. Or whereby or wherein can it lightly be imagined that Christ should become a "minister of sin" rather than by interceding with his Father that such and such men, how vile and abominable soever they shall become, may yet be precious

in his sight, and receive a crown of righteousness from his hand? or doth not such an intercession as some men purpose upon him, as, viz. they who make him to intercede simply and absolutely for the perseverance of believers in their faith, amount to an intercession of every whit as vile and unworthy an import as this ?

If it be said, that the men I speak of do not make Christ an intercessor for the non-failing of the faith of his saints upon such terms as I pretend, as, viz. that their faith may not fail, how wicked or abominable soever they shall be; but thus, that God will preserve them from such wicked and abominable ways and practices, which, should they fall into them, would be the ruin of their faith, and that he would effectually direct and persuade them into the use of such means, which through his grace and blessing on them, shall preserve them, at least from a total and final declining; to this I answer,

1. If this be asserted for the tenor of Christ's intercession for his saints, that God will preserve them from such sins, which would be the bane and ruin of their faith, should they fall into them, the assertors render the intercession of Christ every whit as invalid and ineffectual as they pretend such men do who deny the necessity of the saints' perseverance, notwithstanding Christ's interceding for them. For evident it is, that the saints are not preserved by God, at least in their sense of preserving, from such sins as these, unless we shall say that murder, incest, drunkenness, adultery, dissembling, denying of Christ, &c. are none of these sins. For that the saints of God did fall into such sins as these, is notoriously known from the Scriptures.

If it be said, that though Christ doth not intercede that his saints should simply and absolutely be preserved from such sins, yet be interceded, that in case they fall sometimes into them, they may not be wholly overcome by them, or continue in them, so as not to recover themselves any more, &c.; I answer,

If so, then Christ doth not intercede for the preserving of his saints from sin simply, no, nor from the greatest or foulest of sins simply, hut only so far as they are wholly and absolutely inconsistent with their salvation. Here, 1. I would willingly know from what quarter of the Scriptures the least or gentlest air of such a doctrine or conceit as this breatheth; or where the intercession of Christ for the saints is thus stated or taught by the Holy Ghost. 2. The purport, end, and intent of the

intercession of Christ for the saints is the same with those of his death for them; only the Scripture placeth, though not more virtue, yet a clearer ground of hope or confidence unto the saints for their obtaining the same ends and blessings, in the intercession of Christ for them, than in his death. This is clear from the place lately cited: “Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,” Rom. 8:34. In which tenor of words he plainly buildeth one and the same hope or consolation to the saints upon all these grounds, the death of Christ, his resurrection, his sitting, or being at the right hand of God, his making intercession for them; only with this difference, that he placeth more pregnancy of strength to bear or exhibit the consolation in every latter of these grounds respectively than in the former. Now certain it is, that the adequate end or intent of Christ’s dying for his saints, as to the matter of sanctification, was not to redeem or preserve them only from high misdemeanors, in sinning, and such as are incompatible with their salvation, but from all and all manner of sin whatsoever. “Who gave himself for us,” saith the apostle, “that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,” Tit. 2:14. See also 1 Pet. 1:18, 19, with many other places. Thus then we clearly see that Christ’s intercession no ways mediates in the behalf of the common doctrine of perseverance. However,

A sixth argument for the confirmation of it is this: Whatsoever true believers ask or pray for unto the Father in Christ’s name, especially being necessary unto salvation, that they certainly and always obtain, John 16:23 ; 1 John 5:14. But they daily pray for constancy or perseverance in true faith, as, viz. when they pray unto God, that he would “not lead them into temptation, but deliver them from evil,” Matt. 6:13. Therefore certainly they obtain perseverance of him. I answer,

1. This whole argument might be granted both without any prejudice to the doctrine which we maintain, as also without advantage to that doctrine which it undertakes to protect. For the question is not whether the perseverance of the saints be a thing possible, or whether it may not be obtained by a diligent use of such means, such as frequent or daily prayer unto God in faith is: but whether there be not a possibility that the saints may neglect the use of such means which are necessary and proper for the obtaining or maintaining of it. Therefore,



2. When the minor proposition saith, that “true believers daily pray for perseverance,” &c., it doth, in effect, assert that which is questionable between the controverters for a proof of itself, and so is guilty of that infirmity in arguing which logicians call *petitio principii*, a begging of the question. For to say that the saints daily pray in faith unto God for perseverance, &c., is, being interpreted, to say that they will persevere. So that this proposition is every whit as doubtful as the conclusion itself; and a substantial proof of it is desired. And though this could be sufficiently proved, yet,

3. The major proposition itself in those general terms, wherein it is propounded, is no proposition of faith. For it is not sufficient for the obtaining of what they ask, that the saints should simply pray in the name of Christ, or in faith, *i. e.* with a confidence of receiving what they ask, but further, that they ask or pray according to his will. “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us,” 1 John 5:14. So that the frequent praying of the saints for perseverance though in the name of Christ, and in faith, is no competent proof that they shall certainly obtain it, *i. e.* how wickedly or abominably soever they shall live, until it be first proved that it is according to the will of God that they should pray for it upon such terms.

4, and lastly, If both the propositions were granted, yet would the conclusion follow upon none other terms, than perfection in this life is proved by this argument of the perfectionists. Whatsoever true believers pray for according to the will of God, that they shall certainly obtain, according to the promises, John 16:23 ; 1 John 5:14. But the saints, according to the will of God, and in order to his glory, pray, that his will may be “done on earth, as it is in heaven,” *i. e.* perfectly, for so it is done in heaven. Therefore his will is done perfectly on earth; and consequently perfection is actually attained in this life. Let the perseverists answer this argument of the perfectionists, and they will be able to answer their own.

A seventh argument upon the former account, is this: They who shall certainly and faithfully be preserved and kept by Christ unto the end, shall never, either totally or finally, miscarry or fall away. But all true believers are and shall be thus kept by Christ. Ergo. The minor is proved by these texts of Scripture, John 6:37, 39; 10:27, 28; 17:12; 13:1; 1 Cor.1:8; Eph. 5:23; Jude 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:5. I answer,

1. That the strength and substance of this argument hath received answer

in full already, when we opened at large several of the principal texts insisted upon for the proof of the assumption: whereof we shall give notice presently. Yet,

2. "We answer, that the conclusion itself, "that all true believers shall never miscarry or fall away," rightly understood, opposeth not our sense in the present controversy. We firmly hold and believe, that no true believer shall fall away, (from the grace of God,) or miscarry, (in point of salvation,) and that all who either do thus fall away or miscarry, are no true believers, but wicked apostates, at the time of them falling away, or miscarrying. But this, we presume, satisfies not the argumentators. Therefore,

3. If these words, "shall certainly and faithfully be preserved and kept by Christ unto the end," import no other preservation or keeping by him, but what is meant in, and can be proved from, the texts specified for proof of the minor proposition, the major is denied : they who are preserved and kept by Christ in such a sense, as the Scriptures affirm men to be preserved and kept by him, may possibly miscarry or fall away, both totally and finally from their faith: viz., in case themselves shall not comport with Christ in his act of preserving or keeping them, with their diligence and care to preserve themselves. Nor do any of the Scriptures cited prove the contrary; no, nor yet that those that are preserved by Christ, must, by any compulsory or necessitating power, join with him their care and diligence in preserving themselves. Let us take a brief survey of such of the particulars, which have not been taken off already from the engagement.

The first place, John 6:37, affirmeth, "that Christ will in no wise cast out him that cometh unto him," or, that is coming unto him, GREEK. But this proveth not, but that he that is on his way towards Christ, may go back before he comes fully to him; nor that he that is fully come to him, is under no possibility of departing from him. It only proveth, that there is not the least disposition or inclination in Christ to discourage any man whatsoever from coming to him, nor to deny entertainment or acceptance, to whosoever shall come to him, and while he shall be willing to stay, or abide with him. And elsewhere he persuades and exhorts those that are come to him, to "abide in him," or with him, as John 15:4, and threatens those who shall not abide with him, John 15:4, 6; Heb. 10:38, both which evidently suppose a possibility of their departure from him,

who at present are with him.

Whereas, verse 39, he expresseth himself thus, “ And this is the Father’s will, that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day,” it is evident that he speaketh not of losing believers by defection from faith, but by death. And to assure all believers of this, he declares that it is his Father’s will and pleasure, that he should raise them all up (all that should die believers) unto a blessed estate and condition of life, “at the last day.” Besides, if the place should be meant of losing by defection from faith, the losing of such who should be lost this way, could not be imputed to Christ, who fulfils his Father’s will and pleasure to the uttermost for their preservation, but to themselves, who withdraw themselves from his custody.

Concerning the third place, John 10:27, 28, we spoke largely in the next preceding chapter, page 284, &c., where we showed in what sense Christ, speaking of his sheep, saith, that “ no man shall pluck them out of his hand.” The next place, John 17:12, presenteth us with these words, from Christ in his prayer to the Father, “Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost.” But neither can it be inferred from hence, either that Christ so keepeth all true believers, that none of them at any time perisheth, or is lost; much less that he so keepeth them, that there is no possibility that any of them should ever be lost; no, nor yet that he had kept his apostles themselves (of whom it is a plain case that he speaks particularly in the place) so, or upon any such terms of keeping, that there was no possibility that any of them should be lost, or perish; but only that he had so kept them, that none of them was lost, excepting only the “ son of perdition, as it immediately follows, who was not lost neither for lack of good and sufficient keeping, (wherein doubtless he did partake with his fellows,) but through the great malignity or wretchedness of his own will, his good keeping notwithstanding. So that neither can hence any thing be gathered to prove any such preservation of the saints by Christ, but that they may nevertheless decline, both totally and finally.

The two next places, viz., John 13:1, and 1 Cor. 1:8, upon former examinations, have been found strangers to that cause, which they are here brought to plead. The former, Chap. 10. page 286; the latter, in the same chapter, page 265, and page 323 of this present chapter.

The Scripture next to these, is Eph. 5:23, where Christ, according to the more general sense of interpreters, for some understand it, not of Christ, but of the husband, is termed “the Saviour of his body.” But neither doth this expression import any such preservation of the body, or church of Christ, by him, which supposeth an impossibility of the defection of any one member from it. For, to follow the ducture of the parable or similitude here used by the apostle, the husband is the conservator or keeper of his wife; yet, notwithstanding, the wife may possibly miscarry, and break the marriage covenant, yea, though the husband acts his part upon the best and most commendable terms, for the preserving of her from that folly, that may be. The reason is, because the wife, being a reasonable creature, is to be dealt with, in order to her preservation or keeping in that kind, accordingly, as, viz., by rational arguments or motives only, as by an exemplary, loving, and prudent carriage in the husband towards her, by seasonable instructions, gentle admonitions upon occasion, &c., not by keeping her under lock and key as in a prison, where no man may come near her, nor by any compulsory or violent means, in one kind or other. All such ways of securing her from folly, as these, would ill become the husband, and be very unacceptable to the wife, whether virtuously or viciously disposed. In like manner Christ is the Saviour of his spouse, the church, and not only of the church in general, but of every member thereof: but he executes and performs the interest or office of a Saviour, by ways and means meet to be exercised towards and about such a body, and such members, for their preservation, if we speak of their preservation from sin, as, viz., by inward motions and excitements of his Spirit, unto well doing, and to a continuance therein, by vouchsafing the ministry of his word, the examples and converse of his saints, many providential opportunities, apt and proper to prevail with a rational creature, to mind the things of God, and of its own peace, &c., but not by any necessitating administrations or applications of himself whatsoever. So that though Christ performs the office of a Saviour towards his body, upon the most faithful, careful, and honourable terms that can be imagined, yet there must needs be a possibility, at least, left, for any member thereof to miscarry. But,

2. I rather conceive that Christ is here called, the saviour of his body, in respect of that protection, which he affords unto it, and to every particular member of it, as such, and whilst it continues such; or rather in

respect of that great salvation and deliverance from death, and hell, and all manner of penal evils, which he hath purchased for it with his blood, and with which he will actually invest the members of it in due time. But this doth not prove, that every present member of his body, though it corrupts, and putrefies, and falls off from it, should nevertheless partake in privileges with the sound : nor yet that every member, sound at present, will never hereafter putrefy or corrupt. Nor is it any whit more dishonour, or disparagement unto Christ, to have such, members relating to his body, which are capable of spiritual, than which are liable to corporal, putrefaction. He that vouchsafeth to be the head of a body consisting, either in whole, or in part, of flesh and blood, in, and by this very act of grace, condescendeth to be a head of such members, which are very capable of sinning, and therefore not incapable of dismembering themselves through sin.

To that of Jude, verse 1, “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called,” I answer,

1. It is not denied, but that Christ doth preserve his saints, and that with much care and tenderness, yea, and watcheth over them for good: the question is, whether by his preserving them, he imposeth an unconquerable necessity upon them of persevering in faith unto the end. The simple preservation of the saints by Christ, is all that can be concluded from this Scripture, the manner of it, or the terms on which it is performed, are not at all so much as intimated here.

2. The participle, GREEK, preserved, being of the preter-perfect tense, imports only that the persons to whom he speaks, had been, viz., hitherto, preserved, or kept, by Jesus Christ: or, for Jesus Christ (for so the words will bear); not that he intended, whatsoever their after-misdemeanors in sin should be, to preserve them in faith unto the end. Here is no word, syllable, letter, or iota, of any such thing as this. And if his intent had been to inform them, that they were so kept by Jesus Christ, that there was no danger or possibility for them finally to miscarry, he had laid a very slippery and incongruous foundation to build that serious exhortation upon, wherein he addresses himself unto them, verse 3, viz., to contend earnestly for the faith. For what need they contend earnestly for the faith, who have assurance from God, that they shall be preserved in the faith, whether they contend for it, or no? And if they were, against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, to be preserved by Christ in the

faith, to what purpose, or with what coherence of discourse, doth he remind them of the example of God's severity upon many unbelieving Israelites, even after he had delivered them out of the land of Egypt; as likewise upon those angels, who kept not their first standings? verses 5, 6. The very proposal of such examples unto them, as these, plainly enough supposes, that they also were liable to suffer the same severity from God, upon the like terms.

The next place, 2 Tim.1:12, acquaints us with the apostle Paul's spirit, as far as these words will extend: "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, against that day. I answer, That this place of all the rest is eccentric to the business in hand. For it speaks only of the power of God to keep; whereas this never came within the verge of the question. Or if the will of God to keep, be here included, or supposed also; neither was it ever questioned by me, whether God be willing to keep His saints, or no. That which I oppose, is that manner, which some obtrude, affirming, that God preserves his saints upon such terms, after such a manner, that he peremptorily hereby necessitates their perseverance. Certain I am that the Scripture in hand gives no such sound as this. Besides, that depositum, or thing committed by him unto God, which the apostle here speaks of, was not his faith, (this can in no very tolerable sense be said to be committed unto God,) but rather his soul, which he committed to the care and safe-keeping of God. Nor is there the least doubt or question to be made, but that God was both able, and willing, to keep this safe, as long as the apostle was desirous and willing to intrust him with it, and to suffer it to lie in his hand. But this proveth not, but that the apostle himself was at liberty to have recalled, or taken back this his depositum out of the hand of God: in which case he had been discharged from taking further care of it.

Whereas, Heb. 12:2, Christ is styled the author and finisher of our faith, or rather, of the faith, GREEK, the particle, our, is not in the Greek, it doth not imply any acting of Christ, in, about, or upon, our faith, in a physical way, or with any efficiency (properly so called) much less with any necessitating efficiency; hut that he was an absolute or perfect captain, or leader, in that way of faith, wherein we all stand bound to follow him at the peril of our souls; he was dismayed, discouraged, daunted at nothing, which he was called to suffer or endure, in his course;

but with an excellent and unconquerable spirit of faith, held on his way through the midst of those threatenings and devouring afflictions, which encountered him, until he came where glory and blessedness waited for him, and attended his coming. This to be the sense and meaning of the said words, the carriage of the context round about doth perfectly manifest: we shall not need to argue for it. So that Christ is called, GREEK, *i.e.* the archleader, or captain, of faith, not because by any physical or proper efficiency, much less because by any irresistibleness of power, he worketh the beginning of faith in his saints, but because he marched (as it were) in the head of his saints, and like a valiant and resolute captain, led the way of faith unto all that should believe in him, and showed them how to walk in it. And so, GREEK, the perfecter of faith, not because he actually consummates, or perfecteth, the work, or grace of faith in his saints; (for this work is never brought to perfection in them, in this life; and though it be, in a sense, perfected, in the life to come, yet this perfection is extra speciem, *i. e.* not by adding degrees to it of the same kind, but by a transmutation of it into vision ;) but because by his most noble example he taught men the very, perfection of faith, or believing; which consists, in a quiet, patient, and contentful suffering of all manner of tentations and tribulations, which a man is called to suffer in the world, and the suffering whereof he cannot decline without sin, out of settled and firm belief of receiving that incorruptible crown of blessedness and glory in the end of his race, which God hath promised unto all those that are faithful unto death.

To the last of the texts cited in favour of the argument in hand, 1 Pet. 1:5, plenty of light hath been already given in Chap. 10. whereby it fully appears that it holds no correspondence at all with the opinion or doctrine which pretends unto it in the argument.

A further argument advanced by some to promote the common doctrine of perseverance, uncapable of preferment, is this: They who are sealed in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, that they shall certainly be saved, can neither totally nor finally lose their faith: but all true believers are thus sealed; ergo, they cannot but persevere without any either total or final amission of their faith. For the proof of the minor these Scriptures are produced, 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30; which all speak of the obsignation of believers by the Spirit of God. To this also we answer,

1. By distinguishing the major proposition thus: They who are sealed, &c., that they shall certainly be saved, &c., viz. with such a sealing which is unchangeable or irreversible by any interviences whatsoever, as of sin, wickedness, apostasy, &c., cannot lose their faith. But if the sealing be only such, the continuance whereof depends upon the continuance of the faith of the sealed, and consequently may be reversed or withdrawn, it no ways proves that all they who are partakers of it must of necessity retain their faith without all possibility of any either total or final miscarriage of it. Therefore,

2. We answer further, that “the sealing with the Spirit,” spoken of in the Scripture specified, is the latter kind of sealing, not the former, *i. e.* such a sealing which depends upon the faith of those that are sealed: as in the beginning or first impression of it, so in the duration or continuance of it; and consequently hath none other certainty of its continuance but only the continuance of the said faith, which, as we have already proved in part, and shall, God willing, further prove ere long, being uncertain, the sealing depending on it must needs be uncertain also and reversible. That the sealing proveable from the Scriptures mentioned depends upon the faith of the sealed, is evident by the tenor of one, and by the context and plain circumstances relating to them all: “In whom also,” saith the apostle, Eph.1:13, “*after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise.*”

Nor can it reasonably be here objected, that this indeed proves the dependence of the sealing spoken of upon the faith of the sealed in the first act or impression, but not in the duration of it; for the answer hereunto is plain; viz. that if it depends upon it in respect of the beginning or first act of it, much more doth it thus depend in respect of the perpetuation of it. The reason is, because he that hath once believed, and afterwards shall make shipwreck of his faith, is far more incapable of this grace of sealing than he was before his believing.

If it be objected, that believers are said to be “sealed by the Holy Spirit of God against the day of redemption,” Eph. 4:30, and God is said to “give them the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts,” 2 Cor. 1:22; which gift of the Spirit is likewise said to be “the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,” Eph. 1:14, *i. e.* by an hypallage, until the possession of the purchased redemption, meaning, their full deliverance from sin and sorrow, which expressions seem to import that



the sealing of the Spirit, once granted unto believers, is granted upon such terms that it shall continue in them and upon them until their resurrection unto life and glory; to this I answer,

1. By concession, It is very true the sealing of the Spirit granted unto believers, is granted with an intent or purpose, on God's part, that it should remain perpetually with them. So that if there be an interruption or cancelling of it, it shall not arise from any variableness or mutability in him, nor from any change of mind or affections in him, from what he was in both when he first vouchsafed it unto them. But,

2. I answer further, by way of exception, that the sealing we speak of is never granted by God unto believers themselves upon any such terms, that upon no occasion or occasions whatsoever, as of the greatest and most horrid sins committed and long continued in by them, or the like, it should never be interrupted or defaced: for this is contrary to many plain texts of Scriptures, and particularly unto all those where either apostates from God, or evil-doers and workers of iniquity, are threatened with the loss of God's favour and of the inheritance of life. Such are Heb. 10:26, 21, 38, 39; Ezek. 18:24; Eph. 5:5, 6; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; with many more of like import. Therefore,

3. Believers are said to be sealed by the "Holy Spirit of God against," or until, or for, "the day of redemption," because that holiness, which is wrought in them by the Spirit of God, qualifies them, puts them into a present and actual capacity of partaking of that joy, blessedness, and glory, which the great day of the plenary and full redemption of the saints, *i.e.* of those who lived, and died, and shall then be found such, shall bring with it. And it is called "the earnest of their inheritance," because it is binding or obliging on God's part, as well in respect of his promise, (for he promiseth part and fellowship in this "inheritance" unto those that shall live holily, and not turn aside into ways of sin,) as of the nature of the thing itself, being somewhat, for kind and property, of that "undefiled inheritance" which he hath promised unto holy persons, and which is reserved for them in the heavens. But as earnest, given and received amongst men, though they be engaging and obliging on both sides, simply, and in case of a non-intervention of very material circumstances in order to the breaking or dissolving of the contract ratified by them, yet are they seldom or never engaging or obliging on either side upon such terms that no possible interposition, whether of

providences or other things, can discharge them. A contract of marriage, ratified and confirmed by both parties, with earnest given and received, may, notwithstanding, lawfully be dissolved upon an act of adultery committed by the one party, if the other pleaseth. There is the same consideration likewise of confirmation by earnest in other cases.

4, and lastly, If the apostle's intent had been to inform the Ephesians that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they had received from God, was "the earnest of their inheritance" upon such terms that no unworthiness or wickedness whatsoever on their parts could ever hinder the actual collation of this inheritance upon them, he had plainly prevaricated with that most serious admonition wherein he addresseth himself unto them afterwards: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," Eph. 5:5, 6. To what purpose should he thus severely discipline and nurture those, in order to their escaping the wrath of God, which would certainly come for such and such sins upon men, whom he had a little before assured that there was no danger, no possibility, of their falling under "the wrath of God," or of their miscarrying in point of salvation?

A ninth argument taught by some to speak for the doctrine of perseverance, hitherto opposed, consists of such Scripture similitudes, wherein true believers are resembled to such things which seem to import the certainty of their perseverance. As, viz. Psal. 1:3, they are compared to "a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, whose leaf also shall not wither," &c.; Matt. 7:24, 25, "to a wise man that built his house upon a rock, so that though the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, yet it fell not Luke 8:8, "to seed that fell upon good ground, which sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold." To this I answer,

1. In the general, that no similitude whatsoever, whereby the prosperity, safety, or glory of the saints or children of God are set forth in the Scriptures, does any ways reach the point in question. Because the question is not whether the saints, viz. as such, and abiding such, shall stand for ever in the greatest prosperity, safety, and glory; but, as hath oft, in effect, been said, whether those who have been saints at any time

heretofore, must necessarily be such at this day, and cannot possibly degenerate into any other kind or sort of men for ever. The similitudes produced evince no such thing as this. And therefore,

2. I answer in particular, 1. That the comparison of a man “delighting in the law of the Lord,” Psal. i, to the tree there described, doth not suppose that he can never cease delighting in his law; nor is any such thing as this signified by the non-falling of the leaf of this tree: too frequent experience commandeth acknowledgment on both sides that the saints themselves, or men sometimes delighting in the law of the Lord, may otherwhile delight themselves in ways of vanity and great wickedness. But the purport of the similitude is only to show that the condition of a person eschewing evil, and observing the law of God, and continuing such, shall be ever prosperous and blessed. There is nothing more ordinary in Scripture than to attribute or predict unto men both future punishments and rewards, in respect of their present ways, whether good or evil, simply and without any clause of exception in case of an after change in either; whereas notwithstanding the possibility of a change is clearly supposed, and a suspension likewise, as well of the said punishments as rewards hereupon, according as the change shall be. Thus wicked men in several kinds, whoremongers, adulterers, idolaters, extortioners, drunkards, &c. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10 ; Heb. 13:4, are very frequently threatened with the loss of the kingdom of heaven, without any mention made either of that possibility they are in of repenting afterwards, or of any reversal of such a punishment, in case they shall repent; whereas it is a clear case, from other Scriptures, that both the one and the other are supposed notwithstanding, as, viz. where forgiveness of sins is promised unto sinners of all kinds upon repentance. I forbear to cite places, being so frequent and obvious. So God often promiseth life and salvation unto just and righteous men, without mentioning that possibility they are in of turning aside from their righteousness, or any deprivation or loss of life and salvation they are like to sustain, in case they shall thus turn aside; yet evident it is from other places, of which we shall have occasion to produce many in the following chapter, that both the one and the other are there supposed, as, viz. where backsliders are threatened with the displeasure of God and destruction. But of this idiom of Scripture expression we have taken knowledge formerly, and that more than once. See page 317 of this chapter. And that by the man delighting in the law of

God, compared unto a tree planted, &c., in the passage in hand, is meant not simply that man thus delighting at present, but such a man who should constantly and with perseverance thus delight, is evident from the antithesis which the psalm maketh between him and the wicked man, who is described as perseveringly wicked unto the end. "Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment," verse 5; and again: "And the way of the wicked shall perish," verse 6; which expressions clearly show, that by the sinner or wicked man, here opposed to the godly, is not meant simply such a person who at present is wicked or a sinner, but who shall continue such without repentance unto his end.

2. There is the same consideration of the second comparison, Matt. 7:25. By him who should "hear Christ's sayings and do them," and in that respect is compared to a "wise man who built his house upon a rock," &c., is not to be understood such a person who shall at present, and for a time after hearing, do the sayings of Christ, and afterwards do that which is contrary unto them; but who shall do them, and continue in the practice and doing of them unto the end. This is evident by the course of the Scriptures in such passages as these. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things which we have done, but that we may receive a full reward,"

2 John 8. Which words plainly suppose that we may do many things of a beneficial tendency and import, which must needs be by doing the sayings of Christ, and yet lose the benefit of such doings, by turning aside out of the way of them before we come to receive our reward. So again: "The love of many shall wax cold; but he that continueth unto the end shall be saved," Matt. 24:12, 13. The Galatians did for a time run well, Gal. 5:7, yea, and suffered many things for Christ's and the gospel's sake, Gal. 3:4; but afterwards they were bewitched, Gal. 3:1, proved disobedient to the truth, and so fell from that grace, Gal. 5:4, and favour of God wherein they stood whilst they obeyed the gospel. But we shall, God willing, in due time muster greater numbers of such passages as these.

The third and last comparison, Luke 8:8, hath less colour in the face of it than either of the former. In this, they who receive the word with good and honest hearts, are compared unto "seed that fell on good ground, which springeth up and beareth fruit an hundred fold." For,

1. It is not said, that the seed which fell on good ground are they who hear the word with a good and honest heart, but who, having heard the word,

detain or keep it in a good and honest heart. The tenor of the place in Luke, is this: GREEK, Luke 8:15. So that it is not simply the hearing of the word with a good and honest heart that brings men under the comparison of the seed that fell into good ground; but the retaining and keeping of it in such a heart, and that so as to bring forth fruit with patience, *i. e.* with patient continuance in well doing, whatever temptations they shall meet with to interrupt them in their way, as the word is translated, Rom. 2:7, both by our English translators, and by Calvin himself, who interprets the place accordingly.

2. Our Saviour's intent in describing the several tempers and conditions of those that should hear the gospel, together with the event and consequence of their hearings respectively, by that variety of grounds, which the parable of the sower speaketh of, was not to assert the absolute necessity of the several events specified upon the respective hearings, as if, for instance, those who at the time of their first hearing, were like unto the thorny ground, must necessarily miscarry, and never afterwards believe savingly; but to inform and admonish the world, what is like to be the event and consequence, and what ordinarily is the event and consequence of such hearings as are here described by the several tempers of those that hear, being habitual, and of long standing with them. For otherwise there is no absolute impossibility, but that he, in whose heart the gospel is for the present much incumbered and choked with the cares and pleasures of this life, and so hath been for a long season, may yet recover himself from under this great disadvantage, and so believe unto salvation; though such a recovery as this be very difficult and rare, which is all that our Saviour intended to show or teach, in this part of the parable. There is the same consideration of all the other grounds, or kinds of hearers. So that though he that should hear the word with a good and honest heart should he compared to the seed falling on good ground, yet could there not an absolute necessity be concluded from hence, that therefore such a man must bring forth fruit unto salvation, hut only a great likelihood and hopeful probability that such a hearer will not miscarry by the way, but will hold out with patience in well doing unto the end, and so be saved. So that there is nothing in this argument neither, to keep that doctrine from falling, which is already shaken. Therefore,

A tenth argument is built by some for the honour of the said doctrine,

upon such Scriptures, which testify that such as do not persevere, but make either a total or final defection, in, or from the faith, were never true believers, or by a true faith ingrafted into Christ; and that make it the property or badge of a true believer that he still doth continue in the faith, The Scriptures produced to justify this account, are John 8:31; 1 John 2:19; Heb. 3:6, 14. To this also we answer,

1. In general, three things, 1. That there is no good consistency of sense in it, to say, that they fall away from faith, who never were at it, never were true believers. If it be said, that men are said to fall away from faith, when they fall away from such a faith as they had, as viz., from a temporary faith, or a light and superficial believing of the gospel, &c. I answer, 1. If this be the faith, from which men are said to fall in the Scriptures, then must this needs be the faith also, wherein they are exhorted and charged to persevere. For those that have in any kind, or with any faith embraced the Gospel, and made profession of it, are exhorted to continue in the faith. Now that the Holy Ghost should persuade men to continue in a temporary faith (I mean in such a faith, which is not accompanied with justification, or, which worketh not by love, or which will certainly fail) imports a kind of impious contradiction. 2. If this were all the apostasy or backsliding from faith mentioned in the Scriptures, viz. to apostatise from a temporary, false, hypocritical, dead faith, the sin of apostasy would not be a sin of that deep demerit, or high provocation unto God, which the Scriptures so frequently declare it to be. Nor hath God any reason to say, that his soul shall have no pleasure in such men, who withdraw themselves from a hypocritical, feigned or unsound faith. 3, and lastly, It is no where to be found in the Scriptures, either explicitly or implicitly, that they who make shipwreck of faith, or prove apostates, were no true or sound believers at any time, before this shipwreck; but the contrary hereunto will be made manifest in due time. In the meanwhile, to the Scriptures upon which this argument is built, I answer,

2. And in particular, 1. That these words of Christ, John 8:31, “ If ye continue in my words, then are you my disciples indeed,” do not imply, that in case they should not continue in his words for the time to come, it would argue that they were not his disciples at the present; but that they could not approve themselves disciples of his upon those excellent and blessed terms, which being disciples of his at present, they very well

might do, and were hereby in a ready way of doing, unless they did continue in his words, *i.e.* in obedience unto his commands, unto the end. For that they were his disciples at present without any respect to their continuance, or non-continuance in his words, for the future, is evident from the words immediately preceding in the same verse: "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him." Therefore being such who believed on him, they were his true disciples, though they had not had opportunity as yet to approve themselves his disciples indeed, *i. e.* so as to obtain eternal happiness by their discipleship in this kind.

2. For those words, Heb. 3:6, "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;" together with those of like character, verse 14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," there is much the same consideration of them with the former. The meaning is not, as the rigour of the letter seems to hold forth, as if their being the house of God, or partakers of Christ, at present depended upon their future being, of what for the present they were, (things that are, are what they are, so or so, such or such, determinately, whatsoever follows, or not follows in the future,) no, nor yet as if their future perseverance would declare that their present estates or standing in the faith, was good; for they whose faith for the present is weak and not able to justify them, may notwithstanding, insensibly both to themselves and others, grow up in time to such a faith, which is justifying, and may persevere in it accordingly, but only to show that their being the house of God for the present (and so their being partakers of Christ for the present) would stand them in little stead, would in the end and upshot of all be, as if they had not been, yea, and of a worse consequence too, than so, unless they persevered in the same faith and profession unto the end. This exposition of the places is fully consistent with the main drift and scope of the epistle, which was not to teach the Hebrews to know whether they were true believers, or no, at present, much less to teach them this knowledge, by what they should approve themselves to be, to the day of their death, winch had been to give men darkness to see by, but to animate, encourage, urge, and press them to continue constant in that faith which at present they had embraced, and made profession of, unto the end.

3, and lastly, As to those words, 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us," &c., we gave a large

account in the preceding chapter, where we gave evidence upon evidence that there is no such thing so much as supposed or insinuated in them as that they who once truly believe must of necessity always persevere believing. The clear scope and drift of the context carries them quite another way, I shall here only add this, that the apostle's scope being, as is evident from that verse and the words next preceding, to caution them against those anti-christian teachers that were abroad in the world, lest they should be seduced by them, it had been very incongruous and enough to blunt, if not quite to take off the edge of such a caution, so immediately to subjoin such a doctrine, from whence they might conclude that it was a thing impossible for them to be seduced, at least to the making shipwreck of their faith. Besides, that it was not impossible for them to be thus seduced, is fully evident from verse 24: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." If there had been an impossibility, either that the word which they heard from the beginning should not have remained in them to the end, or that they should not have continued in the Son, doubtless the apostle would never have subjected the former unto question, nor suspended the latter upon the taking place of it; both which are manifestly done by him in the said words. No man speaks at so poor a rate of reason and sense as this: If the light makes things visible, then may a horse or a man be seen by it.

Another argument calculated for the support of the received doctrine of perseverance, pretends regulation by many pregnant places of Scripture, which bear that true believers who are partakers of the quickening Spirit of Christ and of regeneration, cannot either totally or finally lose them or fall away from them. The places levied upon this account are, Rom. 6:2, 8—11; 1 John 3:9; 5:4, 18; Jude 3; Apoc. 20:6. To this I answer,

That upon due examination none of these places will be found guilty of any such doctrine as they stand charged with in this argument. We have at large, in the former chapter, cleared the innocency of one of them, viz. 1 John 3:9, which hears the greatest heat and burthen of the charge; to the rest we answer in coarse.

Rom. 6:2. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" These words import no impossibility of their returning unto sin who are



dead to it, at least, who by the tenor and band of their Christian profession are dead to it, for of this kind of death to sin the apostle seems here to speak, hut only a great and signal unworthiness in them so to do. So that the interrogative particle GREEK, *how*, carries some such sense with it as this: with what face; or with what conscience; or with what comfort, peace, or the like. “*How* then,” saith Joseph to his mistress, “can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?” Gen. 39:9. *How* can I do it, doth not here imply an impossibility for Joseph to have committed the sin, hut only a great unseemliness or unworthiness. See also Matt. 6:4; Gal. 4:9, &c. Calvin himself stretcheth the same line of interpretation over the Scripture in hand which we have done, affirming that “Paul here discourseth what manner of persons it becometh us to be, when God hath showed mercy to us and adopted us freely; and by an adverb of the future tense sheweth what kind of change ought to follow our justification.”

The contents of verses 8—11 of the same chapter, are of the same import and interpretation with the former. “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised again from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,” &c. The intent of the apostle in these passages is nothing less than to teach or insinuate a non-possibility of their returning or living again unto sin who at present are dead unto it: such a supposal as this is diametrically inconsistent with the emphatical energy of his exhortation, verse 12, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies,” as likewise with many other pregnant Scriptures, which shall be consulted with in due time, but to set forth the spiritual condition of the children of God, partly in respect of what it is, partly in respect of what it should or ought to be, by a metaphor or similitude borrowed from what happened unto Christ corporally or literally after this manner. As Christ died once corporally, for the abolishing or taking away of the sins of men, but now liveth and acteth for the advancement of the glory of God, and is not obnoxious unto any more dyings in that kind; in like manner, they who are his, or desire or profess themselves to be his, ought to be conformable to him in these things, in a spiritual way, as, viz. by dying unto sin, *i. e.* by endeavouring to destroy and work out all sinful dispositions from within them, and by ceasing from all sinful actions and

ways, and again, by living unto God, *i.e.* righteously, holily, and so that God may be glorified in the world by the excellency of their conversations, and by persevering and continuing in this course of living unto God without relapsing into that death in sin which is opposite hereunto, even as Christ liveth unto God, so as never to cease thus living unto him. Therefore all that can be inferred from this contexture of Scripture is the duty of perseverance in faith and holiness, or necessity of it, in respect of the great obligation to it that lieth upon the saints, and that profess interest in Christ, and expect salvation by him; not any absolute, not any such necessity of it, which is unavoidable or undecidable by the saints. For to what purpose should they be so solemnly, so seriously cautioned against that whereby they were not in any possibility of suffering inconvenience? If it were impossible that sin should reign in their mortal bodies after they were once dead to it, needless and vain had that exhortation been, “Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies.” The common maxim among divines and interpreters of Scriptures is, that similitudes or metaphors do not run on all four; meaning that they are not to be extended or applied to the spiritual thing intended to be illustrated by them, in all the properties or relations which are found in those things, from which they are taken; but in respect of that only, which suits naturally with the scope of the place where they are used. From the consideration of Christ’s death once suffered by him, without being liable to die the second time, and so of his living unto God without danger of ever having this life extinguished or taken from him, cannot be proved either that men who are once dead unto sin can no more live to it; or that men once alive unto God, cannot possibly suffer any interruption or loss of this life. Because these particulars are not mentioned or insisted upon by the apostle, to prove the absolute, but only an hypothetical or conditional necessity of the saints conforming themselves spiritually unto them, or unto Christ himself in respect of them, *viz.* if they mean to answer the tenor and import of their holy profession, or to obtain life and salvation herein in the end.

Nor do these words, 1 John 5:4, “For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory” (*i. e.* the means of the victory, or, that victorious thing) “that overcometh the world, even our faith,” imply any absolute necessity, that he that is born of God, or, that truly believeth (*viz.* at the present) and in this respect is victorious over

the world, must always retain the strength and vigour of his new birth, or true faith, and so be victorious always, and to the end. All that can be, reasonably, and according to the usual import of such Scripture expressions concluded from this place, is, 1. That all the true-born sons and daughters of God, by means of that spirit of faith which works in them, in this estate of regeneration, are for the present above the temptations and allurements of the world, wherewith others are overcome, and hereby remain in imminent danger of perishing. 2. That they are likewise in such a posture, or condition, by means of their faith, that if they shall GREEK, (as the apostle Paul's word is,) quit themselves like men, and act their faith, or with their faith, according to the virtue, vigour, and usefulness of it, they may make good the ground, or standing, which they have gained, and maintain their present victory or conquest over the world, unto the end. But here is not the least or lightest intimation given, but that those, who are at present victorious over the world, by the aid and working of their faith, may through carelessness, security, and inconsiderateness, suffer the world to recover her former advantage, and so far to insinuate with them, as to cause them to let fall the shield of faith out of their hand, before they be aware of it. See more to this point, page 317 of this chapter.

Nor is there any whit more relief for the cause now in distress, in that other place, verse 18, of this chapter. We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not: but he, that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

For that which is here asserted and held forth by the Holy Ghost, is only this, that the natural genius or property of a true-born child of God, as such, and whilst such, is to refrain from ways or customary practices of sin, and to set a guard (as it were) of holy and potent considerations, and resolutions, about his heart, that the devil may have no entrance or access thither, by the mediation of any temptation whatsoever. Not that such vigilance and care as this are always performed and taken by him, (the contrary hereunto is too much experimented,) but that there is a certain propenseness in that divine nature, wherein he partakes by being born of God, that inclines him hereunto. Men are often in Scripture dialect said to do that, not which they always do, but which they are apt and likely to do, and which very frequently, or customarily they do, (indeed,) and sometimes that which is their duty to do. In this dialect our Saviour

speakeeth, when he saith, "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not," (*i. e.* he is not apt to stumble, or, he doth not ordinarily stumble,) "because he seeth the light of the sun. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth," (*i. e.*, he is apt to stumble, or he often stumbleth) because there is no light in him, "John 11:9, 10. So likewise the apostle Paul: "He that is unmarried, careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord (*i. e.* frequently he doth so, or he hath an opportunity, which the married hath not, to do it: for otherwise we know, that many unmarried persons are far from caring for the things of the Lord;) "but he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife," 1 Cor. 7:32, 33. His meaning is not, that the married, always and without exception of any one in that condition, thus miscarrieth; there are some married persons, that tread lighter on the earth, I mean, that are less addicted to the world, than many that are unmarried. But only that persons so engaged and related, have a temptation upon them, more than the unmarried, and so are apt to turn aside on that hand, yea, and frequently do so. That which followeth is of the same character. "There is a difference a so between a wife, and a virgin: the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit: but she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." The book of the Proverbs aboundeth with such veins of expression as these, viz., where men of such or such a qualification, or relation, are simply said to do so or so, according to the nature and genius of either, not because they do always and universally so, but because they are disposed, apt, and likely, by reason of such a qualification, or relation, to do it, and accordingly, often do it. Thus it is said, "a man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety for his neighbour," Prov. 17:18, *i. e.* He is apt to do it: men weak in understanding and less considerate, often bring themselves into this snare ; not that they always do it, or that every man thus weak doth it. So again: "The poor useth entreaties," *i. e.* Poverty ministereth occasion unto men thus to do, and poor men ordinarily do it: yet some poor there are, who are so far from using entreaties, that they are more surly and rough in their answers, than many that are rich; though it follows, "but the rich answereth roughly," Prov. 18:23. Meaning only, that they are apt to do it, and do it frequently. Other instances of like interpretation, are obvious in this book. See cap. 18:11; 15:18; 16:17, 28, &c. Therefore when

John saith, “Whosoever is bom of God sinneth not and, that “he that is begotten of God keepeth himself,” &c. nothing can be concluded from such sayings, but only that men regenerate have a principle within them, disposing and inclining them unto ways of righteousness, and to vigilancy over themselves; or that regenerate men do frequently abstain from the customary ways of sinning in the world, and watch over themselves : not, that every regenerate man, without exception, doth these things.

2. Some understand the words, “whosoever is bom of God, sinneth not, but keepeth himself,” &c., in a declarative sense, thus : Whosoever desireth to approve himself, whether to himself, or others upon any sufficient ground, for a man regenerate, or bom of God, he must abstain from ways of sin, and watch narrowly and carefully over himself) that the devil may not do him the least hurt: (as our English annotators interpret the phrase, “toucheth him not”:) This interpretation reduceth the place to a like sense and notion with that in the same epistle, (formerly opened,) “little children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteousness, is righteous,” 1 John 3:7; meaning, that no man hath any sufficient ground, either to judge himself a righteous person, or to expect to be so judged by others unless he doth righteousness, *i. e.* lives holily, and in a conscientious observance of the commandments of God, See Chap. 9. page 232. There are many assertions and sayings in Scripture of like consideration with this. Now this interpretation doth not find in the words any impossibility for the regenerate man to sin, or any absolute necessity that he must so keep himself, that the evil one shall not touch him; but only a necessity for him to refrain the one, and to practise the other, if he desires upon good and sufficient grounds, either the comfort within, or the honour without, of being born of God.

As for that argument, which some build upon the metaphor or similitude of the natural birth or generation, viz., that as men are capable only of being once born, and cannot lose the substance of that nature wherein they were born, or change their species afterwards ; so neither are men capable of being born of God more than once, or of losing the substance or nature of this birth, being once made partakers of it; this argument, I say, is built upon one of the lame feet of the similitude, upon which it neither runs nor stands. For it cannot be proved from the Scriptures, that the similitude of the natural generation or birth, is borrowed or used by the Holy Ghost, to signify, teach, or import any such

thing, as this; but only to show, either, 1. That men have no being, no complete, perfect, or desirable being, till they be spiritually born of God, in which respect they are said to be nothing, who are not regenerate, or bom of him, Gal. 6:3: or else, 2. To show, that as no man comes to partake of the nature, or natural properties or endowments of men, but by a suitable generation, *i. e.* by a generation or propagation from man, so neither do or can men partake of the Divine nature, or true holiness, but by a proportionable descent from God: or, 3. To show, that as men, in, and by means of their natural generation and birth, come to partake of the same properties, principles, and propensions, which are natural to their parents who beget them, and act according to the genius of such properties, principles, and propensions; so do they, who are spiritually propagated by God, in, and by means of this propagation, receive such principles and impressions, which are in God himself, and withal act and move in the world, according to the heavenly genius, ducture, bent, and tendency of these: or else, perhaps, 4, and lastly, To show, that as the effect of natural generation, *i. e.* the conception of the person generated in the womb, is secret and unseen, and for the manner of it, in a great measure unknown unto men, “as thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child,” Eccl. 11:5; so is the manner of God’s dealing with the heart, soul, and conscience of a man, in and about the act of regeneration, of a very abstruse consideration, and remote from the apprehensions and understandings of men, according to that of our Saviour, “The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof: but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit,” John 3:8. That these particulars are, or may be, imported in the metaphor or resemblance of the natural generation, may be proved from the Scriptures, but that the impossibility for a man to pass from that species, wherein he was bom, into another, which attendeth the birth natural, was intended to signify a correspondent impossibility in the birth spiritual, can no more be proved, than that this generation or birth consists in a change of essentials, and not of qualities only, or that it is a generation of a corporeal substance, because both these are found in the natural generation. And who knows not, that by straining and stretching similitudes beyond their staple, I mean, beyond what is intended to be signified by them, an endless generation of absurd,

incoherent, and monstrous conceits may be produced? But, 2. The Scriptures do not only nowhere countenance any such deduction from the said simile, but plainly enough assert the contrary, viz., that men may pass from one spiritual species into another, and repass into the former again. “My little children,” saith Paul to the Galatians, “of whom I travail in birth *again* until Christ be formed in you,” Gal. 4:19. And again, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth?” Gal. 5:7. Yet again, “Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace,” Gal. 5:4. So when the apostle affirms it to “be impossible to renew those by repentance, who have once been enlightened,” &c., in case “they fall away,” Heb. 6:4, 6, he clearly supposeth, 1. That some men may fall away, who may be renewed by repentance, i. e. restored to their former species in faith and holiness, from which they had been transformed by sin. 2. That others may fall away, and be trans-speciated upon such terms, that they are incapable of such restoration. But of these passages more hereafter.

Nor doth that of Paul to the Corinthians, “Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel,” 1 Cor. 4:15, import the contrary. For, 1. He doth not say, that it was not possible for them to have many fathers, but only that *de prasenti*, they had not many. This implies, that Paul was the instrument of God, for and in their conversion to the faith at the beginning; and withal, that they at present persisted in that faith, or species of believers, whereunto, or wherein, he had begotten them. But it no ways supposeth, or implies, either that they were unchangeable in that Divine nature, wherein he had begotten them; or incapable of being begotten the second time, in case they had been actually changed. 2. Our English divines, in their annotations upon the place, by “fathers,” understand such as were tender over them, and free in their teachings; as by instructors, GREEK, schoolmasters, who are imperious in their teachings, and teach for hire. 3, and lastly, In saying that they had not many fathers, he doth not necessarily imply, that they had no more but one father; but, possibly, that they had but very few. For *many* is not always, nay, seldom, opposed to *one*; but sometimes, and more frequently, unto *few*.

The next Scripture attempted in favour of the said argument, is that, wherein the saints are exhorted to “contend earnestly for the faith, which

was once delivered unto the saints,” Jude 1:3. But neither doth this place, so much as in face, look like pillar or prop of the doctrine we oppose. For,

1. By faith, is not here meant the grace of faith, or justifying faith, but, (by a metonymy, either of the efficient for the effect, or of the object for the faculty,) as in twenty places besides, the doctrine, or word of faith. “Faith,” say our English annotators upon the place, “is not here taken for faithfulness, nor for credulity, nor for confidence, nor for faith of miracles, but for the doctrine of the Gospel, which is to be believed. So hope is taken for the thing hoped for,” Rom. 8:24; Col. 1:5. This exposition of the word *faith*, is confirmed by the apostle himself, affirming it to have been GREEK, “once delivered,” not once given, “to the saints;” or rather to holy men. It is very improper to say of the grace or habit of faith, that this was delivered, but most proper of the doctrine of faith. This doctrine is said to have been once delivered to holy men, to imply either that it hath been delivered by God so, that he intends never to make any change or alteration of it, or addition to it, which implies the perfection of it, or else that he intends to reveal or deliver it no more, in case the saints who are, and ought to be the guardians and keepers of it, should suffer it to be cashiered, or wholly extinguished in the world. See the aforesaid annotations upon this clause. In saying that it was delivered to holy men, or saints, he intends to lay so much the greater and more effectual obligation upon this generation, to contend earnestly for it, *i. e.* for the maintenance and preservation of it, in its purity of being.

2. If the place should be understood of the grace of justifying faith, nothing could be inferenced from it, but only that they, who are once possessed of such a faith, shall keep and make good this their, possession, if they quit themselves like men, and shall strive in good earnest to effect it. This is nothing but what is fully consonant with the doctrine asserted by us.

Neither hath the last Scripture mentioned any right hand of fellowship to give unto the doctrine now gainsaid. For the Holy Ghost pronouncing, “Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power,” Rev. 20:6, doth not, by the first resurrection necessarily mean regeneration, or renovation by faith: or if this should be granted, doth he necessarily suppose that the second death shall have no power on those who have part in regeneration, unless they keep possession of what they have at present unto the end. Some



learned and grave authors by the first resurrection, in this passage, understand not a spiritual or metaphorical, but a literal and proper resurrection, which shall take place and be effected by God, in the beginning, and, as it were, in the morning of the great day of judgment; as they conceive another, far greater than it, to follow after it, in the close or evening of this day. This interpretation of the first resurrection is marvellously probable from the context itself. For John having, verse 4, described the happy condition of those, who had borne the heat and burden of the day of antichrist, without fainting, in this, “that they sat upon thrones, and had judgment (i. e. power of judging the world) given unto them, and that “ they reigned with Christ a thousand years,” he adds, verse 5, “ This is the first resurrection where likewise he saith, “ That the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Much more might be argued for this exposition: but our present engagement craveth it not.

3. Nor doth the sense contended for of the resurrection, any ways opitulate the cause in distress. For in case it should be said, that the second death shall have no power on those that are regenerate, it must, according to the constant rule (formerly delivered) for the interpretation of such like passages, be understood with this proviso or explication, viz., if they continue regenerate, or be found in the estate of regeneration at their death. Which condition is expressed and insisted upon in several places; and particularly, Rev. 2:11, where our Saviour himself, in his epistle to the Church of Smyrna, promiseth exemption from harm by the second death, only upon condition of victory, i. e. of such a victory, which imports a standing fast and faithful unto Christ in the profession of the gospel, against all temptations, allurements, persecutions, and whatsoever should attempt their loyalty and faithfulness in this kind, unto the end, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” The sense now given of these words, is fully confirmed by those in the verse immediately preceding, “Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life as also by other passages from the same blessed hand, to other churches. “And he that overeometh,” saith he to the church of Thyatira, “and keepeth my words *unto the end*, to him will I give power over the nations,” Rev. 2:26. So to the church of Sardis, “ehold I come quickly; *hold that fast*, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,” Rev. 3:11. To which many others of like character might be added from

other places: but this hath been done already in part, and remains to be done more fully in place more convenient. In the meantime we clearly see that however the received doctrine of perseverance saith unto the Scriptures, "Scriptures, Scriptures," yet these make no other answer, but, "Depart from us, we know you not," you are a doctrine that gather not with us, but scatter what we gather.

## CHAPTER 12.

**The former digression yet further prosecuted : and a possibility of Defection in the saints, or true believers, and this unto death, clearly demonstrated from the Scriptures.**

IT is the saying, as I remember, of Quintilian : “ Many men might have been wise, had they not prevented themselves with an opinion of being wise before they came to it.” Nor is there much question to be made, but that many have miscarried and do miscarry daily, in the great and important affair of their everlasting peace, out of a presumption or conceit, that they are under no danger, in no possibility of any such miscarrying; whose most deplorable and irremediable disaster and loss in this kind might otherwise have been prevented, and their persons crowned with eternal glory, which now are like to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Of so dismal a consequence it is to misunderstand, pervert, or wrest the Scriptures, especially in order to the gratifying of the flesh, or to the occasioning, or encouragement of men to turn the grace of God in the gospel into wantonness. The truth is, that the Scriptures seem in many points and matters of question, to speak very doubtfully, and to deliver such things in several places, and sometimes in the same, which men of contrary judgments may very plausibly interpret in a compliance with them in their respective opinions: though the unquestionable truth be, that even in such cases as these, they love the one opinion, and hate the other. It is no part of our present engagement to prescribe any perfect or complete method, or rule, how to discover which way the heart of the Scripture leaneth, when the tongue or mouth of it seems to be cloven, or divided between two inconsistent opinions. I shall only (by the way) make my reader so far of my counsel in the business, as to give him to know, that when the letter of the Scripture hath for a time left me in a great strait and exigency of thoughts, between contrary opinions, (a condition that hath more than once befallen me,) that brief periphrasis or description of the gospel, which the apostle delivers, calling it the truth which is according unto godliness, hath upon serious consideration, often delivered me; yea, and brought me to such a clear understanding of the letter itself, wherein before I was entangled, that I evidently, and with the

greatest satisfaction I could desire, discerned the mind of God therein; and that with full consonancy to the ordinary phrase and manner of speaking in the Scripture, upon a like occasion. For having this touchstone by an unerring hand given unto me, that the gospel is a truth according unto godliness, *i. e.* a system or body of truth, calculated and framed by God, in all the veins and parts of it, for the exaltation of godliness in the world, I was directed hereby, in the case of doctrines and opinions, incompatible between themselves, to own and cleave unto that, as the truth, and comporting with the gospel, the face whereof was in the clearest and directest manner set for the promotion and advancement of godliness amongst men; and to refuse that which stood in opposition hereunto. Nor did I find it any matter of much difficulty, or doubtfulness of dispute within myself, especially in such cases, and between such opinions, wherein I most desired satisfaction, to decide and determine, which of the two opinions competitors for my consent, was the greater friend unto godliness. That competent knowledge which God had given me, of the general course of the Scriptures, together with the experimental knowledge I had of mine own heart, the workings, reasonings, and debates thereof, seconded with that long observation which I had made of the spirits, principles, and ways of men in the world, together with their ebbings and flowings, their risings and fallings, their advancing and retreats, their firstings and lastings, in matters of religion, in conjunction with that light of reason and understanding, which I have in common with other men; these together were sufficient to teach me, and that to a plenary satisfaction in most cases, what doctrines, what opinions are of the richest and most cordial sympathy and compliance with godliness, and what on the other hand are but faint and loose in their correspondency with her, or otherwise secret enemies unto her.

That that doctrine, which asserteth a possibility even of a final defection from faith, in true believers, well understood, riseth up in the cause of godliness with a far higher hand, than the common opinion about their perseverance, hath been sufficiently, though but in part, proved already, Chap. 9.: the further demonstration hereof sleepeth not, but only awaiteth its season. Our present task is to argue the letter of the Scripture for confirmation of the said doctrine, and to evince the truth thereof from the oracles of God. This done, we shall, God willing, advance

some grounds of reason also built upon the Scriptures, for the further countenance and credit hereof. And because security upon security will not, we suppose, be unacceptable in a business of such grand concernment and import, we shall afterwards produce some examples, upon the same account: and then conclude our discussions of this subject, with an interview of some sayings, wherein it will appear that the God of truth hath drawn a confession and acknowledgment of that truth of his, which we now maintain, from the judgments and consciences of some of the greatest adversaries thereof, or at least so esteemed.

First, for the sense of the Holy Ghost himself in the question depending, we cannot lightly desire any account more satisfactory, than that given by himself in the Old Testament. “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live ? All his righteousness that he hath done, shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal ? are not your ways unequal ? when a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them: for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die, Ezek. 18:24, &c.” What more can the understanding, judgment, soul, or conscience of a man reasonably desire, for their establishment in any truth whatsoever, than is delivered by God himself in this passage, to evince the possibility of a righteous man’s declining from his righteousness, and that unto death ? The latter words of the passage are conclusive hereof, against and above all contradiction. “When a righteous man turneth away, &c. and dieth in them,” (*i. e.* repenteth not of them, forsaketh them not, before his death) “for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die (*viz.* the second death, or perish everlastingly.) For that this death is meant, at least included, in this latter clause, is evident, because otherwise we shall both make an unsavoury tautology in the sentence, and destroy all congruity of sense besides. For without such a supposition, the prophet must be supposed to speak thus: “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them,” (*i. e.* leaveth his natural life under the guilt of them, and without repentance for them) “for the iniquity that he hath done shall he” (leave his natural life, or, have his natural life taken from

him.) When a man dieth in, or under the guilt of his sin, he shall die for his sin, or because of the guilt of his sin, the same death, which he dieth in his sin. Who tasteth not a palpable absurdity, and incoherence of sense, in such a construction as this? whereas, if by dying, in the latter clause, we shall understand, dying, or perishing for ever, the sentence will run clear, and in full consonancy with the general current of the Scriptures, the sense rising thus: when a righteous man shall forsake the ways of righteousness, wherein he hath formerly walked, and turn aside into ways of wickedness, and not repent of these ways before his death, this man shall die the death of the impenitent and unbelievers, which is the second death. In this sense, the sentence perfectly accords (for substance of matter) with such passages as these: “Know ye not the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 9:10. And again: “For this ye know, that no whoremonger or unclean person, or covetous man which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,” Eph. 5:5, 6. And (to omit many others) with that of the same prophet, “therefore thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression—when I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live, if he trust his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it,” Ezek. 33:12, 13. If the righteousness, which an apostate or backslider from ways of righteousness, hath wrought, whilst he was *yet* righteous, shall not deliver him, when he turns aside unto wickedness, what can be imagined should deliver him? doubtless his wickedness, whereunto he hath turned aside from his righteousness, will not befriend him with a deliverance. Nor can it any whit more reasonably be said, that though his former righteousness will not deliver him from a temporal death, yet it may deliver him from eternal death; than in the case of a true repentance it may be said, that though such a repentance will deliver a man from a temporal death, yet will it not deliver him from eternal death. For as the truest repentance that is, though continued in, will not deliver a man from a temporal or natural death, but will most certainly deliver him

from eternal death: in like manner, though apostasy and backsliding from ways of righteousness, persevered in, do not always expose a man to a temporal death, or bring this death upon him, yet they always render man obnoxious to eternal death. Besides, when God threateneth such backsliders as we speak of, that when they shall commit iniquity, &c., “all the righteousness that they have done formerly, shall not be mentioned,” *i. e.* as Calvin himself interprets, “shall not come into any account, as to matter of reward,” evident it is, that if it shall not come into any account at all, as for example to obtain from God so much as the reward of a temporal deliverance, much less shall it turn to any such account, as to be rewarded with that “great recompense of reward,” salvation.

Again that death which God here threateneth against that double or two-fold iniquity of backsliding, is opposed to that life, which is promised to repentance, and perseverance in well-doing. But this life is confessed by all, to be eternal life; therefore the death opposite to it must needs be eternal, or the “second death,” When the apostle saith, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom. 6:23, is it not evident from the antithesis or opposition in the sentence, between the death and life mentioned in it, that by that death, which he affirms to be “the wages of sin,” is meant eternal death? How else will the opposition stand?

Yet again; when God in the Scriptures threatens impenitent persons with death for their sins, doubtless he intends, and means, eternal death, or that death which is the wages of sin. Otherwise we have no sufficient ground to believe, or think, that men dying in their sins without repentance, shall suffer “the vengeance of eternal fire,” but only a temporal or natural death; which the righteous and truly penitent themselves suffer as well as they. Therefore, to say that God threatens impenitent apostates, in the place in hand, with a temporal death only, when as elsewhere he threatens impenitency under the lightest guilt of all, with eternal death, is, in effect, to represent him as vehement and sore in his dissuasives from ordinary and lesser sins; but indifferent and remiss in dissuading from sins of the greatest provocation.

Once more; if it be only a temporal death, which God here threateneth against the sins of apostasy, dying under the guilt of their apostasy, and of all the sins they have committed therein, without repentance then may men under the guilt of the greatest and foulest abominations, remain in

the greatest love and favour of God, as just and righteous men; yea, and without repentance, not only escape damnation, but also inherit eternal life. And “where then is the God of judgment?” Mal. 2:17. Or what will become of that great voice of the Scriptures, which everywhere calleth men to “repentance for the forgiveness of sins?”

That comparative allusion, of the leper under the law, wherewith the Synod of Dort, it seems, much pleased themselves, and others also since, of the same judgment with them, reacheth not the case, nor administers any relief at all to their cause, against the Scripture in hand. “The leper,” say they, “among the Jews, was enforced for a time,” meaning, whilst his leprosy was upon him, “to want his house; but yet he did not, in this time, lose the right of title which he had to this house, because, upon his healing, or cleansing, he might again possess it.” This comparison, I say, squares not with the business in hand. For, 1. The reason why the person leproously affected did not lose the right he had to his house before he was leprous, by his becoming a leper, was, because there was no law by which any man’s right or title to his house was disabled or made void by leprosy: whereas, in the case of apostasy, there is a plain law, or, rather, many laws, established and declared by the great Lawgiver of heaven, by which backsliders from ways of righteousness into ways of sin and abomination, are, without repentance, cut off from all right of title or claim to the inheritance of heaven. “For this ye know,” saith the apostle, as we heard lately, “that no whoremonger, or unclean person, nor covetous man, (who is an idolater,) hath any inheritance,” *i. e.* any right of inheritance, or to inherit; for otherwise no righteous person, yet living in the flesh, hath any actual inheritance, “in the kingdom of Christ and of God,” Eph. 5:5. To object, that this law or decree of heaven holds good against such sinners in every kind, whoremongers, covetous, &c., who never were righteous; not against such, who have been righteous, though now lapsed into these ways of abomination, is not only to declare a law without the sense or authority of the lawmaker, but against that declaration which he hath made of it; who still declareth those the worst and greatest of sinners, who, with the lapsed angels, which we call devils, revolt from his service and ways, to walk in ways that are an abomination to him, “Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid: be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. Why? what is it that causeth the glorious God to appear in such an ecstasy of passion? “For my people,” saith he, “have



committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold, no water,” Jer. 2:12, 13. The Scripture is full of such declarations from God, as this, against apostates. So that the Dort comparison palpably falters in that circumstance, which should have rendered it apposite to their purpose.

2. The leprous person they speak of, was curable before his death, and so, as they say, being healed, might re-enter, and possess his house again. But the revolter from righteousness, of whom Ezekiel speaks, is supposed, as we heard before, to die under the guilt of his revolt, without healing; and consequently to be without all possibility of cure, being dead. Therefore, as the leprous person they speak of, though, whilst he lived, had a right to his house, (no law, as was said, depriving him of this,) yet, during his leprosy upon him, he had no right to enter, take possession, or dwell in his house, the law disabling him hereunto, in respect of his leprosy; and in case he had been leprous until his death, he should have had no more power or right to possess his house, than if his title to it had been wholly lost: in like manner, should it be granted or supposed, that the spiritual leper, of whom Ezekiel speaks, had a right to the kingdom of heaven during his leprosy, yet supposing the cleaving of this leprosy to him until death, (which is the prophet’s supposition,) he could never, according to the terms of the comparison, have any right to enter, or to be admitted thereunto ; and consequently his leprosy, I mean, his apostasy, had been final, and so unto death. Therefore there is nothing gained to the Dort cause by this similitude, though it should be allowed a pre-eminence above similitudes, and permitted to run on all four. And whereas they say and grant, that a truly righteous man may, for a time, viz., from his turning aside into ways of wickedness, until his renewing by repentance, lose, though not *jus*, his right unto, yet *aptitudinem*, his fitness or meetness for, the kingdom of heaven, they argue quite besides the argument levied against them from the passage in hand. For in this reasoning they take it for granted, that their righteous man never dieth in those ways of wickedness, into which he tumeth aside, but always cometh to be “renewed again by repentance,” before his death; whereas Ezekiel, expressly, and *in terminis*, supposeth a possibility, at least, that his righteous man may die, in or under his apostasy from righteousness, and in his committing of iniquity. “When a righteous man,” saith he, “turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth

iniquity, *and dieth in them*, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die,” Ezek. 18:26. Therefore all this while the prophet of God, and the Synod of Dort, are two.

Nor is that distinction made choice of by Dr. Prideaux to arbitrate and umpire the difference between them, able to set them through or make them friends. “There is,” saith he, “a double righteousness, one inherent, or of works, by which we are sanctified; another imputed, or of faith, whereby we are justified. A righteous man may turn aside from his own righteousness, viz. from his holiness, and fall into very heinous sins; but it doth not follow from hence that therefore he hath wholly shaken from him,” or out of him, “the righteousness of Christ.” But,

1. The Doctor here presents us with a piece of new divinity, in making sanctification and justification no more intimate friends than that one can live without the company and presence of the other. Doubtless, if a man’s justification may stay behind when his holiness is departed, that assertion of the apostle will hardly stand—“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” Heb. 12:14. And if “they that are Christ’s,” i.e. who believe in Christ, and thereby are justified, “have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,” (another assertion of the same apostle,) how their relation unto Christ should stand, and yet their holiness sink and fall, I understand not. But I leave his friends to be his enemies in this.

2. He seems, by his word “penitus,” wholly, thoroughly, or altogether, to be singular also in another strain of divinity, and to teach magis and minus in justification : for in saying, that from a man’s apostatising “from his own righteousness, it doth not follow that therefore he hath *wholly* or *altogether* shaken off the imputed righteousness of Christ,” doth he not imply that a man may shake off some part of the righteousness of Christ from him, and yet keep another part of it upon him ? or else, that by sinning he may come to wear the entire garment or clothing of it so loosely that it will be ready to drop or fall off from him every hour? and consequently, that the righteousness of Christ sits faster and closer upon some than upon others, yea, upon the same person at one time than another.

3. and lastly, Were it granted unto the Doctor, that from a man’s turning aside from his own holiness, it doth not follow that therefore he hath wholly divested himself of the righteousness of Christ imputed; yet from God’s determination, or pronouncing a man to be in an estate of

condemnation and of death, it follows roundly, that therefore he is divested of the righteousness of Christ imputed, if ever he were invested with it before; because no man with that righteousness upon him can be in such an estate. Now, we have, upon several grounds proved, that the righteous man under that apostasy wherein Ezekiel describes and presents him, is pronounced by God a child not of a temporal, but of eternal death and condemnation. This, indeed, the Doctor denies, but gives no reason of his denial, for which I blame him not: only I must crave leave to say, that the chair weigheth not so much as one good argument with me, much less as many. So that all this while, he that spake, and still speaks, unto the world by Ezekiel, is no friend to that doctrine which denieth the possibility of a righteous man's declining even unto death.

Notwithstanding some formerly, it seems, in favour of this doctrine, attempted an escape from that sword of Ezekiel lately drawn against it, by pretending that by the righteous man mentioned in the passages in hand, is not meant a person truly and really righteous, but a kind of formal hypocrite or outside professor of righteousness. But this shift had so little colour in the face of it, that it caused the after-patrons of the doctrine to blush and be ashamed of it. The Synod of Dort itself, though it accepted of many helps in other cases of every whit as little strength as this, yet, judging itself better provided at that point where this was offered to relieve it, it was rejected by the members of this Synod, and that with some kind of disparagement put upon it; I will not say with any such intent or eye that they who thus rejected it might be looked upon as men who would own nothing but what was solid and substantial. The forementioned Doctor also rewards the Synod of Dort with his approbation for refusing to intrust their cause in the hand of such a sorry advocate as this: so that we shall not need to pause this interpretation to pass through the fire for the trial of it, inasmuch as it hath been publicly stigmatized for reprobate silver by the greatest masters of that cause for the maintenance whereof it was devised. And, indeed, the whole series and carriage of the context, from verse 20 to the end of the chapter, demonstratively evinceth, that by the righteous man all along is meant such a man as was or is truly righteous, and who, had he persevered in that way of righteousness wherein he sometimes walked, should have worn the crown of righteousness, and received the reward of a righteous

man. As by the wicked man all along opposed to him, is meant not a person seemingly wicked, but truly and really so, as is acknowledged on all hands. So that the antithesis, or opposition between the righteous and the wicked, running so visibly quite through the body of the discourse, must needs be dissolved, if by the righteous man should be meant a person seemingly righteous only; he that is righteous in this sense being truly and really wicked. Yea, Calvin, writing upon the place, though he sets himself to manage it so that the cause of perseverance may not suffer damage by it, and in order hereunto turns many a stone to make the righteous man a man seemingly righteous only, yet now and then, by the force and power of the truth, is turned quite out of the way of his design, so as to make this righteous man righteous in such a sense that nothing should be wanting unto him but perseverance in his way to make him blessed ; which clearly sounds an acknowledgment of true righteousness in the man styled righteous by the prophet; inasmuch as perseverance in a way of formality, or of a pretended and seeming righteousness only, is quite out of the way to any man's blessedness. To this we may add, that of Dr. Prideaux, in the forecited lecture: "But if the righteous man," saith he, "should turn himself away from his counterfeit and hypocritical righteousness, should he not rather live than die, inasmuch as he should put off the wolf to put on the lamb?"

Others have sought for a door of escape from that exposition of the place yet in hand, which we have asserted, in the hypothetical tenor and form of the words themselves. Ezekiel, say these, doth not affirm that a righteous man may turn aside from his righteousness, &c., or that he may die in his apostasy; but only speaks conditionally, or by way of supposition, viz. that if, or when, he shall turn away from his righteousness, &c., then he shall die, &c. and from such a conditional saying as this, nothing positive can be concluded. But this sanctuary also hath been profaned by some of the chief guardians themselves of that cause for the protection and safety whereof it was built. There needs no more be done, though much more might be done, yea, and hath been done by others, than what the learned Doctor, so lately named, hath done himself for demolishing it. Having propounded the argument from the place in Ezekiel according to the import of the interpretation asserted by us, "Some," saith he, "answer, that a condition proves nothing in being; which, how true soever it may be in respect of such hypothetical, which

are made use of only for the amplification of matters, and serve for the aggravating either of the difficulty or indignity of a thing, as, 'If I should climb up into heaven, thou art there,' Psal. 139, it were ridiculous to infer, therefore a man may climb into heaven; yet such conditional sayings, upon which admonitions, promises, or threatenings are built, do at least suppose something in possibility, however by virtue of their tenor and form they suppose nothing in being. For no man seriously intending to encourage a student in his way would speak thus to him, If thou wilt get all the books in the university library by heart, thou shalt be Doctor this commencement. Besides, in the case in hand, he that had a mind to deride the prophet might readily come upon him thus: But a righteous man, according to the judgment of those that are orthodox, cannot turn away from his righteousness; therefore your threatening is in vain. Thus we see to how little purpose it is to seek for starting holes in such logic quirks as these." Thus far this great assertor of the Synod of Dort and of the cause which they maintained, to show the vanity of such a sense or construction put upon the words now in debate, which shall render them merely conditional, and will not allow them to import so much as a possibility of any thing contained or expressed in them; to which much more of the like demonstration might he added, if I conceived that light stood in need of light for the manifestation of it. To say that God putteth a case in such solemnity and emphaticalness of words and phrase as are remarkable all along the carriage of the place in hand, of which there is no possibility that it should ever happen or be exemplified in reality of event, and this in vindication of himself and the equity of his dealings and proceedings with men, is to bring a scandal and reproach of weakness, such a weakness as is scarce to be paralleled in men, upon that infinite wisdom of his which magnifies itself in all his words and works: which also is so much the more unworthy and unpardonable, when there is a sense commodious, every way worthy as well the infinite wisdom as goodness of God, pertinent and proper to the occasion he hath in hand, which offers itself plainly, clearly, without any straining of word or phrase, unto us.

Lastly, Some there are, who, being loath to see the cause of their long-magnified doctrine of perseverance dying by the hand of the Scripture yet before us, and despairing of help for it by any or by all the forementioned applications, have thought it not amiss, in a case of such imminent and

extreme danger, to try conclusions by administering this antidote unto it. When God threatens, say they, the righteous man apostatising, that for the iniquity which he committeth he shall die, he speaks neither of the first death, properly so called, nor yet of the second death, but of afflictions, judgments, and calamities, (oft signified in Scripture by the word “death,” as prosperity is by the word “life,”) which God often brings upon truly good and righteous men, when they greatly provoke him by their sins. To this I answer,

1. That this mist hath been already scattered and dispelled by the strength of that light which shineth in the early part of this chapter; by which it clearly appeareth that by the death threatened by God against a righteous man’s backsliding, and persevering in his backslidings unto death, (which we there show to be the case put by God in the Scripture in hand,) is meant eternal death; therefore not any temporal judgments or afflictions, at least, not only or principally these. Yet here we add,

2. That it ill becomes an interpreter of Scripture to recede from the plain, proper, and best-known signification of words, save only when necessitated by the exigency either of the context and scope of the place in hand, or else of the nature and condition of the matter, as viz. when the sense which the common signification of the word raiseth and exhibiteth is inconsistent either with the course of the Scriptures or with the principles of reason; neither of which can be reasonably pretended in this place.

3. The express tenor of the context itself riseth up like an armed man against this interpretation. For the execution or infliction of that death which is here threatened against the righteous man that shall apostatise, is not threatened but upon his dying under his apostasy; in which case there is no opportunity for God to inflict any temporal judgments upon men: “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and *dieth in them*, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die,” Ezek. 18:26.

4. “When God threateneth at any time such and such sins, or such and such sinners, in one kind or other, with death, it is of very dangerous consequence, and tending to allay and break the energy and power, and consequently to hinder the operation, of such threatenings upon the consciences of men, for any man to put a qualified or mitigating sense upon the word “death,” especially not being authorised by God himself so

to do.

5, and lastly, The authors themselves of this interpretation seem to be half heartless and hopeless of doing any great matters for their cause by it, and in their explication of themselves about it, they distinguish themselves quite besides that, which should relieve them. The word, death, they say, in the prophet, doth not *in the first sense* of it, signify eternal death, as neither doth the word, life, in the opposite part of the sentence, signify eternal life. But what though the word, death, doth not in the controverted passage, signify eternal death, in the first sense or signification of it, yet if it signifieth it in the second, third, or fourth sense, or if it signifieth it at all, it is of one and the same consideration, for the eviction of what is claimed by us from the place; which is, that a man truly righteous may so degenerate and apostatise, that God will inflict eternal death upon him. I omit to demand of these interpreters, by what authority or confidence of genius, they undertake thus particularly to range and marshal the several senses, which, they say, God intended in such and such words, giving the pre-eminence to such or such a sense, and saying to another, stand back, or come behind.

If we had mere ignorance or nescience of the truth to encounter, or satisfy, though in conjunction with the greatest parts of judgment and understanding on the one hand, and with the greatest wanness and scrupulousness of circumspection on the other hand, the traversing of the Scripture already insisted upon, were sufficient, I conceive, without any further labour of arguing, to gain credit and fulness of consent to that truth, which is now upon the advance. But prejudice and partiality are hydropical, and hardly satisfiable: and these are our chief adversaries in the business in hand. Therefore to reconcile, if possible, the disaffections of these, with the truth, we shall show them more visions from heaven of the same light and truth with the former. And first, upon, this account, we shall remember them of a passage, formerly argued; and gather up, at present, only so much of the substance of the discussion, and that with what brevity may be, as we judge serviceable for our present purpose, referring the reader to a review, if he please, of the larger examination. The tenor of the place is this: "Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him: O thou wicked, servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his Lord was wroth, and

delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matt, 18:32, &c. Evident it is from our Saviour's rendition or application of the parable, " So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if," &c., speaking unto his disciples, verse 1, and to Peter, more particularly verse 21, that persons truly regenerate, and justified before God, for such were they, to whom in special manner he addresseth the parable, and the application of it, and indeed the whole carriage of the parable sheweth that it was calculated and formed only for such, may through high misdemeanors in sinning, as, for example, by unmercifulness, cruelty, oppression, &c., turn themselves out of the justifying grace and favour of God, quench the spirit of regeneration, and come to have their portions with hypocrites and unbelievers. If men will make any thing at all of the parable in a clear and direct way, without troubling or obscuring, without wresting or straining, the carriage, scope, and pregnant tendency of it, such an inference cannot be avoided. Further satisfaction herein may be had for the price only of so much pains, as the perusal of pages 222, 225, of the 8th chapter of this discourse, will require.

Nor doth the reversal of such acts of grace in God as we speak of, argue the least mutability, or shadow of change in him, either in respect of his love, counsels, or decrees; it only argueth a change and alteration in men. For at that very instant, when God loveth a person, and justifieth him, in respect of his faith, he hateth with a perfect hatred, and such which hath death and destruction in the womb of it, all wicked, cruel, and unmerciful men whatsoever. So that in case that person, whom God now loveth and justifieth, shall at any time hereafter turn wicked, cruel, unmerciful, or the like, which is very possible for him to do, he falleth under that hatred of God, which was in him, even whilst he loved him, and which is always in him, unchangeably, unalterably, and indispensably, in respect of any person or persons whatsoever. Therefore in such a case as this, there is no alteration or change of affection in God, but only a change of mind, will, and ways in men, and that from better unto worse. A man living, or travelling, in a temperate climate, finds no inconvenience or offence, either from cold or heat: but let him remove his dwelling, or travel, either so far north, where extremity of cold reigneth, or so far towards the south, where heat rageth, he will accordingly suffer, from the one and the



other. Yet this alteration in the state or condition of his body, doth not argue any alteration at all in the heavens, or in the earth, or in the air: these remain so affected, whilst he suffers from them, as they were, when he was no ways inconvenienced by them. A man who by the laws of the land, or state where he liveth, is at present obnoxious to no penalty at all, inflicted by these laws upon malefactors, but is capable of the greatest dignity or preferment, which that state affordeth; as soon as he turneth a murderer, or traitor to this state, divests himself of that capacity of honour wherein he stood before, and becomes liable to the severest punishment which those laws inflict. The man's condition hereby is much altered from what it was, and that by reason of the law; but yet the law itself is altogether the same which it was under the one condition of this man, and the other. In like manner God justifieth a man this day, upon his believing : to morrow, upon a return to his vomit of unbelief, he divests him of his justification, and requires his sins at his hand: yet God, notwithstanding these contrary acts in reference unto and about one and the same person, remains entirely one and the same, no ways changed, no ways altered, in his affections, or in any thing else relating to him. But of this GREEK already. See Chap 4.

The root or grand occasion of the common mistake in this point, I mean, why men conceive and judge, that if God loves a man at one time, and hates him at another, he must needs be variable in his affection, is that capital error of a personal election, and reprobation; or of such a love in God, which should produce the former, and hatred in him, that should cause the latter. For if there were any such affection or love in God, which did directly and immediately respect, or relate unto the person of any man, then, I confess, it would follow, that if he should at any time hate that person, whom he ever loved, he should be changeable in his affections. But supposing that, which we shall, God sparing life, and affording opportunity otherwise, demonstratively prove in due time, viz. that God bears no affection, or love, to the person of any man, simply in respect of his personality, or because he is this man, and not another; but that all the love that he bears to men, or to any person of man, is either in respect of their nature, and as they are men, in respect of which he bears a general or common love to them; or in respect of their qualifications, as they are good men, in one degree or other ; in respect whereof, he bears a more special love to them : and again, that he bears no hatred to the

person of any man simply, or, as he is this man, and not another, but only as he is sinful and wicked; it may very easily be conceived, how men may gain, and lose, and regain, and again lose, the love of God, without the least change or alteration in this his affection. Suppose a prince loved no one of his subjects, more than another, as they were his subjects, but thus far loved them all with a gracious and benevolous affection; yet in case any of them should prove more virtuous and deserving than their fellows, should upon such an account, express signal and high respects of favour unto them; and on the other hand, in case any of them proved vicious and ill deserving, should frown upon these, and threaten to punish them, in case of a non-amendment, it may well be apprehended, how the subjects of such a prince may often both rise and fall in their prince's affections, he himself remaining uniform and constant herein.

Another testimony from Scripture, evidencing the same truth with the former, speaketh these words, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. 9:27. From which words I argue thus: if Paul, after his conversion unto Christ, was in a possibility of being, or becoming a reprobate, or castaway, then may true believers fall away, both totally and finally, (for finally ever includes totally.) But the antecedent is true; Paul, after his conversion, was in the possibility mentioned. Ergo. The major proposition, I presume, will pass without control. The minor is proved from the place in hand, thus: that which Paul was very solicitous and industrious to prevent, he was in a possibility of suffering, or being made. But Paul was very solicitous and industrious to prevent his being made a castaway, as the Scripture in hand plainly avoucheth; he "kept under his body, and brought it into subjection," in order to prevent his becoming a castaway. Ergo, he was in danger or possibility of being made a castaway. The reason of the consequence in the major proposition is, because no man of understanding will be solicitous to prevent or hinder the coming to pass of such a thing, the coming to pass whereof he knows to be impossible.

It is like it will be here said, that the word GREEK, translated, a "castaway," doth not always signify a person wholly rejected of God, but sometimes a person reprobable, in respect of some particular action, omission, or course. I answer,

1. The word GREEK, in the writings of this apostle, is constantly

translated “reprobate.” See Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 13:5—7; 2 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:16; unless it be once, as viz., Heb. 6:8, where it is Englished, “rejected;” which, in sense and import, is as much as, “reprobate,” as is evident from the expressions which accompany it. “But that (earth) which beareth thorns and briers, is *rejected*, and is *nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned*,” Heb. 6:8.

2. Chrysostom, who is generally acknowledged to be the best expositor of Scripture amongst all the fathers, by the word GREEK understands a person rejected from salvation by God. “Do not think,” saith Paul, “as this author commenteth on the place, “when once you have believed, that it is sufficient to save you: for if it be not sufficient for me to salvation, to preach, to teach, to bring thousands unto God, unless I be unreprouable also in my personal ways and actions, much less will it be so unto you.”

3. Pareus himself acknowledgeth, that, besides Chrysostom, Ambrose, Theophylact, and Lyra, interpret the word, and place, accordingly.

4. Our best modern expositors themselves, though for the most part they strain hard to deliver the common doctrine of perseverance out of the hand of the word GREEK, yet, by the tenor of the sentence, and manifest scope of the place, are so amused in their design, that in their expressions they fall into the way of the ancient interpretation mentioned. Calvin, having mentioned the exposition of some to this effect, “Lest, when I have well and faithfully taught others, I myself, by an evil course of life, should receive the sentence of damnation from God,” doth not at all tax this exposition, but only presents another, which, as he supposeth, doth *melius quadrare*, better suit with the place. And yet, immediately after, acknowledgeth that the sentence may cohere with the former saying, thus, “Lest I be defrauded,” or deprived, “of the Gospel, whereof others, by my means, are made partakers.” Which sense, with that contended for by us, are no more two, but one interpretation. Musculus is right down for the same sense, upon the place. “The first reason,” saith he, “is, lest he should become a reprobate, *i. e.* lest he should be amongst those who do not run,” or strive, “lawfully, and so never come to obtain the prize.” Mr. John Deodate, as he is Englished upon the place, thus, “A castaway, *i. e.* found unworthy of being approved and rewarded, as one of God’s bold champions. He hath a relation to that there were certain colleges or schools of these exercises of arms, in which those that were entered, if they did not submit themselves to the rigour of the discipline, or did not

prove as they should do, were *crossed out* by the masters.” Our English annotators, who plough much of their ground with Mr. Deodate’s heifer, incumber their opinion about perseverance, with words of the same import upon the place. So that the best ancient expositors, freely, and with perfect agreement to themselves, and their judgments otherwise, and the best modern interpreters, unwillingly, and without sparing themselves in their opinions otherwise, give testimony to such a sense of the word GREEK, and so of the whole period, which clearly asserteth a possibility of a final fall in true believers.

5, and lastly, The scope of the place, from verse 23, evinceth the legitimacy of such a sense in both, above all contradiction. For the apostle, having asserted this for the reason, motive, or end, why he had made himself a servant unto all men, in bearing with all men’s humours and weaknesses in the course of his ministry, viz., that he might be partaker of the Gospel, *i. e.* of the saving benefit or blessing of the Gospel, with them, verse 23, and again, that what he did, he did it to “obtain an incorruptible crown, verse 25, plainly sheweth, that that which he sought to prevent, by running, and fighting at such a high rate as he did, was not the blame or disparagement of some such misbehaviour, under which, notwithstanding he might retain the saving love of God, but the loss of his part and portion in the Gospel, and of that incorruptible crown, which he sought, by that severe hand, which he still held over himself, to obtain.

Pareus seems not to be very difficult in admitting the sense of the place contended for, but denies that this sense doth any ways imply or suppose any danger or possibility of Paul’s becoming a reprobate. To which point he reasoneth thus: “As it followeth not; Christ died lest believers should perish, therefore believers are in danger of perishing, but on the contrary, that believers are out of the danger of perishing because Christ died for them. So,” saith he, “it doth not follow; I keep under my body, lest I should be a reprobate, therefore I am in danger of being a reprobate; but on the contrary, therefore there is no danger of my being a reprobate because I keep my body under,” &c.

To this I answer, If this author intends only to assert by this arguing that Paul was in no danger of being a reprobate, whilst he did continue that holy exercise of keeping under his body, which he speaks of, I am not he that shall oppose him. Doubtless Paul was in no danger, no, nor yet in any possibility, which is much less than a danger, of being a reprobate, or

of being rejected by God, whilst he used the means specified to prevent it. But, his intent be to assert, or affirm, either that Paul, whilst he did keep under his body, was in no possibility of giving over his exercise in this kind; or, that in case of giving it over, he was in no possibility of becoming a reprobate hereby; my answer is, that his argument reacheth neither of these, unless it be in a way of confutation. For as there was a precedaneous possibility, that Christ who did die, might not have died; and again, in case he had not died, that the persons who now believe in him, and are saved, should not have been saved; in like manner, there was a possibility, both that Paul, who did now keep under his body, might not have kept it under, or might not continue to keep it under, and that in case he had not continued to keep it under, he might be a reprobate. Nay, as in case Christ had not died, there had not been a possibility only, but even a certainty of their perishing, who now by believing on him are saved; in like manner, in case Paul had deserted his exercise of keeping under his body, there had been more than a possibility, and no whit less than a certainty, of his proving a reprobate ; though now, by means of his persevering therein unto the end, as we have cause in abundance to judge concerning him, he be saved, So that the argument recoils, as we see, upon the author himself, and the cause which he seeks to maintain by it.

Our English annotators upon the place are very tender of admitting any such sense of the word GREEK, which should imply any uncertainty in the apostle of his election or of obtaining the prize. But the truth is, that that sense of the word, for which we have contested, doth no ways imply the former; nor yet, if by uncertainty be meant any thing grievous or discouraging to the apostle, the latter. For, 1. He might, notwithstanding a possibility of becoming a reprobate afterwards, know certainly that for the present he was elected, inasmuch as know he might with the greatest certainty, and doubtless did, that he did believe. And that all those who truly believe, are elected, our adversaries themselves will not deny. 2. Notwithstanding such a possibility as we suppose, of his becoming a reprobate, he might have as much certainty of obtaining the prize, as he desired, or was any ways meet or reasonable for him, either to desire or enjoy. This certainty he might have, and questionless had, upon his continuance in well doing: and for any man to be certain of obtaining the prize, though he should apostatise and decline into ways of wickedness, is not a certainty either meet for God to give, or for any man

to receive. Somewhat more was said upon this account in the ninth chapter.

The next passage we shall insist upon, to evince the possibility of a final defection in the saints, openeth itself in these words. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them, by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,” Heb. 6:4–8. Answerable hereunto is another in the same epistle: “For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?” Heb. 10:26–29. Evident it is, that in these two passages the Holy Ghost, after a most serious manner, and with a very pathetic and moving strain of speech and discourse, scarce the like to be found in all the Scriptures, admonisheth those, who are at present true believers, to take heed of relapsing into the ways of their former ignorance and impiety. This caveat or admonition he vehemently presseth by an argument of this import; that in case they shall thus relapse, there will be very little, or no hope at all of their recovery, or return to the estate of faith and grace wherein they now stand. Before the faces of such sayings and passages as these, rightly understood, and duly considered, there is no standing for that doctrine, which denies a possibility either of a total or final defection in the saints. But this light also is darkened in the heavens thereof, by the interposition of the veils of these two exceptions. 1. That the apostle in the said passages affirms nothing positively concerning the falling away of those he speaks of, but only conditionally, and upon supposition. 2. That he doth not speak of

true and sound believers, but of hypocrites, and such who had faith only in show, not in substance. The former of these exceptions has been already non-suited, and that by some of the ablest patrons themselves of the cause of perseverance; where we were taught from a pen of that learning, “That such conditional sayings upon which admonitions, promises, or threatenings are built, do at least suppose something in possibility, however by virtue of their tenor and form they suppose nothing in being.” But,

2. As to the places in hand, there is not any hypothetical sign or conditional particle to be found in either of them, as they come from the Holy Ghost, and are carried in the original. Those two “ifs,” appearing in the English translation, the one in the former place, the other in the latter, show, it may be, the translators inclination to the cause, but not their faithfulness in their engagement; an infirmity whereunto they were very subject, as we shall have occasion to take notice of the second time ere long in another instance of like partiality: but the tenor of both the passages in hand is so ordered by the apostle, that he plainly declares how great and fearful the danger is, or will be, “when” believers do or shall “fall away,” not “if,” or in case, they shall “fall away.”

To the latter exception, which pretends to find only hypocrites, and not true believers, staged in both passages, we likewise answer, that it glosseth no whit better than the former, if not much worse, considering that the persons presented in the said passages are described by such characters and signal excellences which the Scriptures are wont to appropriate unto saints and true believers, and that when they intend to show them in the best and greatest of their glory. What we say herein will, I suppose, be made above all gainsaying by instancing particulars.

1. The persons spoken of are, in the former of the passages, said to be GREEK, *i. e.* “enlightened,” meaning, with the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ in the gospel. How frequently is this grace of illumination or enlightening attributed unto the saints or true believers? The apostle having said that “the god of this world had blinded the eyes of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . . should shine unto them,” he adds soon after, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,” GREEK, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” &c., 2 Cor. 4:6: so that true believers are here distinguished from unbelievers by this, that

they are “enlightened the others having their eyes “blinded,” by reason whereof they are without any such illumination. So again, where he saith to these Hebrews, “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened,” GREEK, “ye endured a great fight of afflictions,” Heb. 10:32, he clearly termeth their conversion itself to the faith, the illumination or enlightening: yea, this illumination is so appropriate unto the saints or sound believers, that our Saviour himself styles the generation of them GREEK, “children of light,” Luke 16:8. So the apostle Paul admonisheth the Ephesians to walk, GREEK, “as children, of the light,” Eph. 5:8; meaning, as saints or true believers; and in the same verse he distinguisheth their present estate in faith from their former in unbelief thus, “For ye were sometimes darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord.”

2. In the latter of the said passages, the persons spoken of are said to have “received” GREEK, *i.e.* “the acknowledgment of the truth;” which expression doth not signify the bare notion or apprehension of what the gospel teacheth and holdeth forth, of which they are capable who are the most professed enemies thereof, but such a consenting and subjection hereunto which worketh effectually in men to a separating of themselves from sin and sinners. This is the constant acception and import of the phrase in the Scriptures. “Always learning,” saith the apostle, ‘of silly women, laden with sins,’ “and never able to come,” GREEK, “to an acknowledgment of the truth,” 2 Tim. 3:7; *i. e.* to a thorough and cordial assent to it, which is wont to utter itself in a suitable conversation. So when he saith that “God will have all men to be saved and to come,” GREEK, “to the knowledge,” or acknowledgment, rather, “of the truth,” 1 Tim. 2:4, by “coming to the acknowledgment of the truth,” he cannot mean any thing ineffectual or unavailable to salvation; such a sense would render the sentence senseless, and exhibit it in this form, “God will have all men to be saved, and come to” that which is not able to save them. Therefore, by “the acknowledgment of the truth,” is meant such a cordial and thorough assent to it which consists in a sound and saving faith. So when he saith that “the servant of the Lord must be gentle . . . . in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance,” GREEK, “to”, or for, “the acknowledgment of the truth,” he clearly supposeth “the acknowledgment of the truth” to be either the end or special perfection of repentance, *i. e.*



such a thing which demonstrates repentance to be sound and of the saving kind, wherever it is found. There is but one place more where the phrase is used, and here also it bears as high a sense as in the testimonies already opened: "Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgement of the truth which is after godliness," Titus 1:1. By the "acknowledgment of the truth," cannot any such knowledge of it be meant, in this place, which should stand with unregeneracy or unbelief, because then Paul should style himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ according to" the exigency or requirement of such a "knowledge" of the gospel in men which is insufficient to save them—a sense ridiculous and preposterous. Somewhat was done by us in the preceding chapter towards the unfolding of this place: yea, the word GREEK, "acknowledgment," in construction with other words of like import, as the "acknowledgment of Christ," Eph. 1:17; "of the sons of God," Eph. 4:13; "of God," Col. 1:10; "of the mystery of God," Col. 2:2; "of him that hath called us," 2 Pet. 1:3, to omit many the like, still importeth such a knowledge which accompanieth a sound and saving faith.

3. The persons queried about, are said to be "sanctified with" or by "the blood of the covenant," i. e. by their being sprinkled herewith to be separated from such who refuse this sprinkling, as likewise from the pollutions and defilements of the world, To "be sanctified," when applied unto persons, is not found in any other sense throughout the New Testament, unless it be where persons bear the consideration and respect of things rather than of persons, and this only in that one place, 1 Cor 7:14. But of this signification of the word, which we claim in this place, instances are so frequent and obvious that we shall not need to mention any; and we have formerly, I remember, demonstratively evinced that the Scripture in hand speaks of none other but a true and real sanctification, Chap, 8., and such which is appropriate unto saints.

4. They are said to "taste," or to have "tasted, of the heavenly gift." By this heavenly gift may be meant either, 1. Christ himself, who is called "the gift of God," John 4:10; or, 2. The Holy Ghost, who is said to be "given to them that believe," Acts 11:17; and again, to them "who obey God," Acts 5:32; or, 3. The gift of righteousness or justification, for this also is called a "gift," Rom. 5:15—17; or, 4, and lastly, Salvation or eternal life, which also is termed the "gift of God," Rom. 6:23. Now, all these gifts are given

only unto true believers. Whatsoever is meant by this heavenly gift, certain it is that, by tasting, is not meant any light or superficial impression made upon the hearts or souls of men, through the sense or apprehension of it, but an emphatical, inward, and affectuous relish and sense of the excellent and heavenly sweetness and pleasantness of it, opposed to a bare speculation, or naked apprehension thereof. The reason hereof is clear, viz. because the tasting of this heavenly gift here spoken of, is not mentioned by the apostle in a way of easing or extenuating the sin of those that should fall away from Christ, but by way of aggravation and exaggeration of the heinousness and unreasonableness thereof; and withal, more fully to declare and assert the equitableness of that severity in God, which is here denounced against those, that shall sin the great sin of apostasy here spoken of, it must needs be much more unworthy and provoking in the sight of God, for a man to turn his back upon, and renounce those ways, that profession, wherein God hath come home to him, and answered the joy of his heart abundantly, than it would be in case he had only heard of great matters, and had his head filled, but had really found and felt nothing with his heart and soul truly excellent and glorious. Therefore, to understand the phrase of "Tasting the heavenly gift," in any diminutive or extenuating sense, is to break the heart, as it were, to dissipate the strength and power of the apostle's arguing in this place. And besides, the very word itself, to "taste," ordinarily in Scripture, imports a real communion with, or participation and enjoyment, if the thing be good, of that which is said to be tasted. "O *taste* and see," saith David, "that the Lord is good," *Psa.* 34:8. His intent, doubtless, was not to invite men to a slight or superficial taste of the goodness of God, but to a real, cordial, and thorough experiment, and satisfactory enjoyment of it. So, when he that made the great invitation in the parable, expressed himself thus to his servants: "For I say unto you that none of those that were bidden shall *taste* of my supper," *Luke* 14:24; his meaning clearly was, that they should not partake of the sweetness and benefit thereof with those who should accept of his invitation, and come unto it. In like manner, when Peter speaketh thus to his Christian Jews, "If so be that ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious," *1 Pet.* 2:3, his meaning, questionless, is not to press his exhortation directed unto them in the former verse, upon a consideration of any faint or vanishing taste, such as hypocrites and false-hearted

Christians might have of the graciousness of the Lord, but of such a taste wherein they had had a real, inward, and sensible experiment thereof. See other instances of the like import of the word, Acts 10:10; Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Heb. 2:9, &c. Sometimes, I acknowledge, the word GREEK, to taste, signifies only a slender perception of the quality or taste of a thing; but this is only or chiefly when the relish or taste of a thing is desired to be known; as John 2:9; Matt. 27:34; which cannot be affirmed in the Scripture in hand. And, besides, according to the sense of our adversaries in the present debate, if the taste of the heavenly gift we speak of should imply no more, but only a faint or weak perception of the sweetness and glorious excellency of it, yet even this may be sufficient to evince truth of grace and faith in men. For their opinion is, that a man may be a true believer with a grain of mustard seed only, *i. e.* with a very slender relish and taste of spiritual things; yea, their sense is, that in some cases of desertion, and under the guilt of some enormous courses, they may have little or no taste of them at all. Therefore we may safely conclude, that the persons whose estates and conditions are exhibited unto us by the Holy Ghost, in the Scriptures in hand, are true saints, true believers.

5. This conclusion may be rendered yet more authentic, and full of light unto us, by considering further, that the said persons are here represented as having sometimes worn this crown of saintship upon their heads; they were made “partakers of the Holy Ghost.” To be made partaker of the Holy Ghost signifies no less than to be made partaker of his regenerating virtue or power, (as to be made partaker of Christ, signifies a saving communion with, him by faith, Heb. 3:1; and so, communion or partnership with God, 1 John 1:2,6, imports an estate of salvation, at least;) it usually signifies more, *viz.* some additional and richer communion with him by way of oblation, or earnest; *i. e.* such a communion with him, by which true believers become mightily strengthened in their inner man, and filled with confidence of receiving the great inheritance of heaven in due time. Upon this account the apostle prays, on the behalf of the Corinthians, whom he supposeth all along to have been true believers, that GREEK, “the communion of the Holy Ghost might he with them;” 2 Cor. 13:13; meaning, some richer and greater presence of his than yet they had found with them. And if we mind the course of the Scriptures they will inform us that the Holy Ghost was not

wont to be given unto men, (and, consequently, they could not be partakers of him,) but upon and after their believing. See to this purpose, John 7:39; Acts 19:2; Eph. 1:13; Acts 2:38; 8:15—17; 10:47; 11:17; 15:8; 2 Cor. 1:22; Acts 5:32, &c. Therefore, certainly, those that are said to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, are at least true believers.

If it be objected, But many had the gift of miracles, and in this respect may be said to have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, who yet never were true believers, as appears from those words of Christ unto some of them; “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,” Matt. 7:23; to this I answer, It is very true, some who made profession of the faith of Christ, and yet wrought iniquity all the while they made this profession, had the gift of miracles for the confirmation of that faith which they professed. But such persons as these are nowhere in Scripture said to have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, or to have had communion or fellowship with him. Even all the while that they wrought miracles in the name of Christ, they had communion or fellowship with Satan, and were partakers of his spirit. Communion with, or partaking of the Holy Ghost, is, as hath been shown in Scripture dialect, appropriated only to true believers. And whereas Christ will say to them, GREEK, “I never knew you,” *i. e.* approved you or liked your ways, the computation of the time of his dislike of them is here intimated to begin, when they began to work iniquity, and more particularly, when they entered upon the profession of his name, without ceasing from their works of iniquity. So that the meaning of the clause, “I never knew you,” is only this: From first to last of your profession of my name, even when others honoured and highly esteemed you for those excellent gifts which were given you, and for your exercise of them to the benefit of many, I never looked upon you as any true disciples or friends of mine, seeing and beholding your evil ways and works.

The persons yet sought after, whether hypocrites or true believers, are further said to have “tasted the good word of God,” *i. e.* according to the import of the word “tasting,” lately opened, to have had a lively and satisfactory impression upon their hearts and consciences, of the goodness, *i. e.* of the great beneficialness of the word of God, or the gospel, unto them; as being “able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance amongst those that are sanctified,” Acts 20:32. Goodness seems to be interpreted by the Holy Ghost himself, by bountifulness, or

beneficialness. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a *good* man, some would even dare to die,” Rom. 5:8. “For a good man,” *i. e.* for a liberal, or bountiful man, and who is a benefactor unto many. So again: “Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” Matt. 20:15; *i. e.* because I am bountiful, or beneficent unto men? Upon this account, doubtless, it is, that the law of God is termed “good,” Rom. 7:12; viz., because, as David saith, “in keeping it,” and the precepts of it, “there is great reward,” Psalm 19:11; the law of God is a great benefactress to those who observe it. Now then, this tasting the goodness of the word of God, the Scripture clearly appropriateth unto the saints. “Are not my words *good*?” or, do not my words good, as our last translation readeth, “unto him that walketh uprightly?” Micah 2:7; implying that they are not so to wicked men. “The law of thy mouth,” saith David in his holy applications unto God, “is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver,” Psalm 119:72; “unto me,”— tacitly implying, that other men, of a different spirit from him, do not taste any such sweetness or goodness in them. And the apostle Paul puts the point in question, out of question, in that decision of his: “To the one,” meaning to unbelieving and wicked men, “we are the savour of death unto death: and to the other,” *i. e.* to those who truly believe, “the savour of life unto life,” 2 Cor. 2:16. So that hypocrites and unbelievers are incapable, whilst such, of tasting the “good word of God,” *i. e.* the word of God in the goodness, sweetness, and bountifulness of it; the taste which they have of it, is in the terror and severity of it against wicked men. And whereas tasting is not without touching, nor touching without application of the object, it appears that those who “taste the good word of God,” must needs make application of the goodness of it unto themselves and their own souls; which our adversaries frequently make a distinguishing character between hypocrites and true believers.

7, and lastly, The persons we speak of, are yet further said to have tasted GREEK, “the powers of the world to come,” *i. e.* not the powers of miracles, as Pareus interprets, there is a manifest incongruity in such an interpretation, which we leave to the reader to conceive; but either the joys of heaven, as our English annotators, or the might and glorious things of immortality, which is the more general interpretation; or rather, as Cameron expoundeth, the incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, &c. of the Son of God; which may therefore be

termed, GREEK, “the powers of the world to come,” either because they are, in respect of their full notification unto men, appropriate to the times of the gospel, wherein the great change and new state of spiritual affairs, in comparison of what they were under the law, may well be termed, “the world to come,” as Pareus and others understand the expression, both here and elsewhere in the same epistle, and with all, are exceeding full of efficacy and power, to ravish the hearts of men into the heavens ; or else because the glorious estate of life and immortality in the world to come, as it is attainable, and enjoyable by men, depends upon them, as a means full of efficacy and power to bring them hereunto. But whatsoever in particular be meant by these powers of the world to come, incontrovertible it is, that in the general, somewhat transcendently excellent and glorious was intended by the apostle to be signified by them. So that for any person to be admitted to the taste of them, *i. e.* to a real and inward feeling of their virtue, influence, and vigour, upon his heart and soul, fully evinceth him to be a member of the congregation of the first-born, to have spiritual communion by faith with Jesus Christ.

The premises relating to the two passages yet under debate, considered, I am so far from questioning whether the apostle speaks of true and sound believers in them, that I verily judge that he purposely sought out several of the most emphatical and signal characters of believers, yea, such which are hardly, or rather not at all, to be found in the ordinary sort of true believers, hut only in those that are most eminent amongst them, that so he might give them to understand and consider, that not true believers only, and such who, though sound, were yet weak in the faith, might fall away and perish, but that even such also, who were lifted up nearer unto heaven than their fellows, might, through carelessness and carnal security, dash themselves in pieces against the same stone, and make shipwreck of their souls, as well as they. Yea, I conceive yet further, that that *impossibility* of being “renewed again by repentance,” upon, or after, a falling away, which he asserts in the former passage of the two, was not asserted by him with an eye to the state or condition of ordinary believers, in case of their falling away, as if he intended to conclude them under the heavy doom of such an impossibility, hut with an eye only to the most deplorable condition of such who, having been sons of the morning, and shined with more lustre and brightness than other stars, in the firmament of Christian profession,

should, notwithstanding, afterwards fall with Satan “ like lightning from heaven,” Luke 10:18. My meaning is not to imply, that true believers, if but of a mean stature and growth in the faith, are in no danger of final obduration, or under no great difficulty of recovering their former standing, in case they shall fall away, but only to observe, that that most serious and severe admonition, administered by the apostle in the passages in hand, by way of antidote against the great evil of apostasy, was in a more especial manner calculated for the estates and conditions of grand believers.

But that it was no part of his intent in the said passages to caution hypocrites or outside professors against falling away, but true believers only, besides the characters already observed and examined upon the point, there are these reasons pregnant of proof.

1. There is no clause, phrase, or word in either of the places, any ways characteristic or descriptive of hypocrisy, or hypocrites: there are none of those colours to be seen, which are wont to be used in drawing or limning the portraitures or shapes of these beasts, as distinguished from creatures of a better kind. All the lineaments of the persons presented in these tables, before the mention of their falling away, become the best and fairest faces of the saints, as hath been proved, and are not to be found in any other. Yea, the greatest and most intelligent believer under heaven hath no reason but to desire part and fellowship with the hypocrites here described, in all those characters and properties, which are attributed unto them before their falling away, or sinning wilfully.

2. True believers are in an estate of honour, and are lifted up on high, towards the heavens; in which respect they have from whence to fall. But hypocrites are as near hell already, as lightly they can be, till they be actually fallen into it. From whence, then, are they capable of falling ? Men of estates may fail, and break, but beggars are in no such danger. If hypocrites fall away, it must be from their hypocrisy; but this is rather a rising, than a fall. A beggar cannot be said to break, but only when he gets an estate. When he doth this, the beggar is broke.

3. It is no punishment at all to hypocrites, to be under no possibility of being renewed again by repentance. Nay, in case they should fall away, it would be a benefit and blessing unto them, to be under an impossibility of being renewed again. For if this were their case it would be impossible for them to be ever hypocrites again; and, doubtless, it is no great

judgment upon any man to be made incapable of such a preferment.

4, and lastly, It stands off forty foot at least from all probability, that the apostle writing only unto those whom he judged true and sound believers (as appears from several places in the epistle, as chap. 3:14; 6:9, &c.) should in the most serious, emphatical, and weighty passages hereof, admonish them of such evils or dangers which only concerned other men, and whereunto themselves were not at all obnoxious: yea, and whereunto if they had been obnoxious, all the cautions, admonitions, warnings, threatenings in the world would not, according to their principles with whom we have now to do, have relieved or delivered them. To say that such admonitions are a means to preserve those from apostasy, who are by other means (as suppose the absolute decree of God, or the interposal of his irresistible power for their perseverance, or the like,) in no possibility of apostatising, is to say that washing is a means to make snow white, or the rearing up of a pillar in the air a means to keep the heavens from falling. But more of this in the chapter following.

Thus then we clearly see by the impartial discussion of the two Scriptures lately insisted upon, that there is a possibility that true believers, yea, the greatest in this rank or order of men, may fall away, and that to an impossibility of a return to their former standing, by repentance. Whether the apostle speaks of a district and absolute impossibility in this place, or of such an impossibility only, which our Saviour expoundeth by a difficulty, Matt. 19:23—26, doth no ways alter the state of that conclusion which we have wrought from it. Pareus, from Nazianzen, mentioneth six several significations of the word impossible, and preferreth two of them with equal approbation to the apostle's service in this place. Neither of them imports that rigid or district impossibility we speak of: but the one, such an impossibility which is caused through, want of strength in him that should perform a thing; the other, such which exceedeth the course of nature and efficiency of second causes. So that he supposeth a liberty or power remaining in God to renew again by repentance the persons here spoken of, after their falling away, notwithstanding that impossibility which is here asserted of their recovery. Which interpretation of his I willingly subscribe unto, and could plead the cause of such a subscription if it were pertinent to the process of the business in hand.

That which is commonly alleged in opposition to what hath been



argued concerning the two last Scriptures, is of little consideration, excepting only those Scriptures and arguments by which the doctrine of perseverance in the general is wont to be maintained, both which we have answered at large in the two next preceding chapters. To say with Pareus, that “The apostasy and event prove the persons spoken of to have been hypocrites,” is to cause a man’s opinion to rise up early to praise itself. His refuge of an hypothetical form in the words is but a sanctuary built in the air, as we showed formerly. There is nothing hypothetical in either of the passages, if there were, his greatest friends and abettors have polluted that sanctuary, and made it unclean for his use, as hath once and again been declared. And with how little truth, he, or any man can affirm, that “All things here attributed to the apostates spoken of, illuminations, gifts of tongues and miracles, the tasting of the good word of God and faith, &c., amount to nothing more than to what hypocrites may have,” hath been our chief design in the traverse of the places to show and prove.

The next Scripture testimony we shall produce, and briefly urge in the cause under maintenance, is in the same epistle with the former, and speaketh these words: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. 10:38. Our English translators, out of good will doubtless to a bad cause, have almost defaced this testimony, by substituting any man for the just man. For whereas they translate, “but if any man draw back,” the original readeth, GREEK, *i. e.* and if (or, but if) *he* (*i. e.* the just man, who should live by his faith, viz. if he continues in it,) shall draw back. Beza himself likewise before them, had stained the honour of his faithfulness with the same blot in his translation. But the mind of the Holy Ghost in the words is plain, and without parable, viz. that if the just man, who lives (*i. e.* who at present enjoys the favour of God, and thereby is supported in all his trials,) and should live always by his faith (if he continues in it, as Pareus well glosseth) shall draw back, or shall be withdrawn (viz. through fear or sloth, as the word properly signifieth, see Acts 20:27,) from his believing, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him,” *i. e.* according to the import of the Hebraism, my soul shall hate or abhor him to the death ; as it is also expounded in the words immediately following, “But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but, &c. From hence then evident it is, that such a man who is just or righteous man, and under promise of living for ever by his faith, (and, therefore, also a true and sound believer,) may

draw back or be withdrawal to the contracting of the hatred of God, and to destruction in the end. The forlorn hope of evading, because the sentence is hypothetical or conditional, not positive, hath been routed over and over, yea, and is abandoned by some of the great masters themselves of that cause, unto the defence whereof it pretendeth; and, however, in this place it would be most preposterous. For if it should be supposed that the just man, who is in a way and under a promise of living by his faith, Were in no danger or possibility of drawing back, and that to the loss of the favour of God and ruin of his soul, God must be conceived to speak here at no better rate of wisdom or understanding than thus, The just shall live by his faith, but if he shall do that which is simply and utterly impossible for him to do, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. What savour of wisdom, yea, or of common sense, is there in admonishing or cautioning men against such evils, which there is no possibility for them to fall into, yea, and this known unto themselves? Therefore this testimony, for confirmation of the doctrine we maintain, is like "a king upon his throne, against whom there is no rising up."

The same doctrine is clearly taught and asserted by our Saviour himself in the parable of the sower. But he, saith he, "that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended," Matt. 13:20, 21. The words are part of the explication, or application of the said parable, wherein our Saviour plainly declareth that the persons typified by the several grounds specified therein, were several kinds of hearers of the gospel, some whereof should, or would, hear upon such terms, that their hearing would turn to the blessed account of saving their souls: these, saith he, were signified by the good ground, spoken of in the parable. Others of them, would hear without reaping any such benefit thereby; and this partly by not setting their minds at all upon what they should hear, who were resembled to the high way: partly by a neglect to ground and establish themselves thoroughly in the truth and goodness of the gospel, after their hearing and embracing of it; these, saith he, were shadowed by the stony ground; partly also, by suffering the cares and lusts of the world to overgrow the sproutings or puttings forth of the gospel in their hearts and souls, by means whereof they came, after a while, to wither, and die quite

away: and these, saith he, were pointed at by the thorny ground. Now those signified by the stony ground, he expressly calleth GREEK, *i. e.* persons who continue for a time, or a season, *i. e.*, as Luke explaineth, GREEK, who believe for a season, Luke 8:13. So that those, who only for a time believe, and afterward make defection from Christ, and from the gospel, are nevertheless numbered and ranked by him amongst believers. The words in Luke are very particular: "They on the rock, are they which when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." From whence it appears, that the hearers here described, are not compared to the rock, or stony ground, for the hardness of their hearts; inasmuch as they are said to receive the word with joy; which argues an ingenuity and teachableness of spirit in them; and is elsewhere, *viz.* Acts 2:41, taken knowledge of by the Holy Ghost, as an index or sign of a true believer: but for such a property, disposition, or temper as this, *viz.* not to give or afford the word so received, a radication in their hearts and souls, so intimous, serious, and solid, which should be sufficient to maintain their belief of it, and good affections to it, against all such occurrences in the world, which may oppose or attempt either the one or the other. For this is the nature or condition of a stony, or rocky soil, which hath but a thin coat or covering of mould, or earth upon it; *viz.* to exhibit a speedy and sudden spring, or blade, from the seed that is sown in it, but not to afford this blade, or seed, any such rooting, which is sufficient to preserve it from scorching, when the sun beats violently and for any considerable space of time together, with his fiery beams upon it. But as the blade which springs from one and the same kind of seed, as suppose from wheat, or any other grain, though sown in different, yea, or contrary soils, is yet of the same species, or kind, the nature of the soil not changing the specifical nature of the seed that is sown in it, and "God giving to every seed its own body," of what temper soever the ground is, where it is sown; in like manner that faith, which springs from the same seed of the gospel, must needs be of one and the same nature and kind, though this seed be sown in hearts of never so differing a constitution and frame; the temper of the heart, be it what it will be, not being able specifically to alter, either the gospel, or the natural fruit issuing from it. And as a blade or ear of wheat, though it be blasted before the harvest, is not hereby proved not to have been a true blade or ear of wheat before it was blasted:

in like manner the withering or decay of any man's faith, by what means or occasion soever, before his death, doth not prove it to have been a false, counterfeit, or hypocritical faith, or a faith of any other kind, than that which is true, real, and permanent unto the end. Therefore the possibility of a final defection in those, who for a time truly believe, believe with the same kind of faith, whereby others persevering in it to the end are saved, is clearly asserted by the Lord Christ himself in the said parable; yea, there is not only a possibility in this kind asserted by him, but a futurity also of many instances, wherein this possibility would be acted upon the great stage of the world.

Against the interpretation given, and the inference drawn from the words lately opened, it is commonly objected, that our Saviour in the second ground (and so in the third) doth not set forth the condition of true believers, or speak of true justifying faith, hut of temporary believers, and of a temporary faith. I answer,

1. That if by a temporary faith the objectors mean a faith which is eventually only such, it is acknowledged that the Scripture owneth both the term and notion. But if by a temporary faith they mean a faith intrinsically, in the nature and kind of it, differing from that which is true and truly justifying, they devise a new kind of faith which the Scriptures know not of; and of how dangerous a consequence the introducing of an exotic faith into the affairs of Christian religion may be, I leave to themselves to judge. For those hearers or professors, which in Matthew's relation of the parable our Saviours calls GREEK, temporaries, are explained by Luke to be such, GREEK, who *believe* for a season, as we heard before. Now the ordinary and most familiar signification of the word, GREEK, to believe, in such cases and construction as this, I mean, when it is used indefinitely, and without a specification of some particular object, is to signify, true believers, or such who believe unto justification. Instances hereof axe too many to be numbered. And to turn words out of their native, proper, and best-known significations, into unusual, by, and improper senses, no exigency of the context compelling hereunto, hath always been adjudged a dangerous breach of the laws of Scripture interpretation.

2. The temporariness of the faith found in the stony ground, did not arise from the nature, essence, or any internal property in this faith, wherein it was specifically distinguished from the faith of those emparabled by the

good ground, but partly from the ill temper or inconsiderateness of the persons, in whom it was seated, who neglected to give it sufficient rooting or establishment within them; partly from the outward occasions of trouble and persecution for the gospel which came upon them. Nor is there any sufficient ground or reason to conceive, that it would have proved temporary, and not perseverant unto the end, had not the persons in whom it was, been attempted with persecution. When the year proves very moist, showers of rain ever and anon falling from heaven upon the earth, the seed that is sown even in stony ground, is wont to prosper, and to yield a competent increase at least at harvest, to the husbandman. Otherwise such ground as this would never be sown: nor would our Saviour have had the opportunity of furnishing this parable with the mention of that event, or ill success, which frequently befalleth the seed sown in such ground. Now if the temporariness of the faith we speak of, was occasioned only *ab extra*, or by means accidental and extraneous to it, evident it is that it did not arise from any thing in the nature or essence of it: and consequently, that it was of the same kind, with that faith which did persevere unto the end.

2. If the temporariness of the faith now under consideration, either caused it or declared it to be specifically distinct from that which was sound and justifying, and which held out to the end, then must perseverance, or an impossibility of failing, be of the nature and essence of true faith; the consequence is evident, and needs no proof. Now, 1. If perseverance be of the essence of true faith, no person can be looked upon as a true believer, either by himself or others, until he gives up the ghost and dieth. 2. If an impossibility of failing be of the essence hereof, no man can be looked upon as a true believer, neither before nor after he be dead. For what though a man's faith should not fail before he dieth, yet this amounts to no sufficient proof, that therefore it was impossible that it should fail. A thousand things come to pass which yet very possibly might not have come to pass.

Again, that perseverance is not an intrinsical or essential property of true faith, but only a consequent of it, and that contingent, appears, 1. From the principles of our adversaries themselves, who commonly distinguish between the gift of faith, and the gift of perseverance. "Wonderful it is," saith Austin, "and much to be wondered at, that God should, unto some of his children whom he hath regenerated in Christ, to

whom he hath given *faith*, hope, and love, *not give perseverance*.” Therefore, by the way, Austin is no friend to the common doctrine of perseverance, as it is taught and received amongst us. 2. Adam, they say, before his fall, had true faith, or, at least, a power of believing truly, (which now they acknowledge in none but in those who truly believe,) however certain it is that he had true holiness; yet the event in his fall declared that perseverance was not essential unto any of these; and consequently, that in case he had persevered in them, this perseverance had been but consequential to them, and that contingently. 3. That which is true is not wont to be opposed or contradistinguished to that which is temporary, but may commodiously enough be distinguished into that which endureth for a season, and that which continueth for ever. Therefore, that which is temporary and which standeth by a man only for a short time, may be as real and true in the same kind, as that which continueth with him all his days. 4. If the faith under dispute were temporary in the nature of it, and not by consequence only, then could not a falling away from it, by those who were possessed of it, be the cause of their final miscarriage, (which yet our Saviour plainly supposeth,) because should they have persevered in it, they should not have been any whit more saved by it, than now they were under a falling away from it. The losing of that, which being kept, would not have saved a man, cannot be the cause of his loss of salvation. 5, and lastly, If the said faith were temporary, and not true, justifying or saving in the nature of it, then the lack of moisture afterwards could not be the reason or cause thereof; I mean, why it was, or proved temporary, and not true or saving. The reason hereof is plain ; viz. because what is so or so, such or such, in the nature of it, cannot be made or become such by any after means or occasion whatsoever, whether act or neglect. But evident it is, from the express words of the parable, that the reason why the said faith was, or proved temporary, was because the seed, from whence it sprang, wanted moisture. “And some fell upon a rock,” saith Luke, “and as soon as it was sprung up,” *i. e.* within a short time after, as appears Mark 4:17, “it withered away, because it lacked moisture,” Luke 8:6. So that the withering of it away, *i. e.* the temporariness of it, was occasioned or caused by a means accidental and extrinsical to it, viz., the want of a thoroughness or cordialness of affection to the gospel, by which the faith or belief of it now sprung in the soul, should have been fed, nourished,

and maintained against all attempts made by persecution to destroy it.

If it be demanded, But why are true and sound believers compared to the good ground, if they also were true believers who are resembled by the stony ground? I answer, The reason hereof is plain, viz., not because the faith in the persons signified by these different grounds, was different in the nature or kind of it, but because the issue or event of their respective faiths differs, and this by way of similitude to the different success or event of the same com (for kind) growing in stony ground, and in good or fruitful ground.

If it be objected, That the faith of the stony ground is said to have no root, whereas it is evident, that the faith of the good ground which persevered, had root. And doth not this argue a specifical or essential difference between them? I answer, When the faith of the stony ground is said not to have root, the meaning cannot be that it had no root at all: for then it could not have sprouted or sprung up, as it did; but that it had no considerable root, no sufficient rooting to carry it through unto the harvest; or, no root comparatively, viz., in respect of the faith of the good ground. The seed that is sown in stony ground, though it wants depth of earth, and so must needs want depth of rooting, yet it hath some kind of rooting proportionable to the earth which it hath, as well as that which is sown in the best and fruitfulest soil that is. So that as a sprout or blade of wheat sown in stony ground doth not differ specifically from a blade of the same grain growing in good ground, though this hath, by the opportunity of the soil, the better rooting: in like manner the faith of him that believeth only for a time, and afterwards declineth, may be essentially and for nature, the same faith with his who persevereth unto the end. If difference in rooting should cause or prove a specifical difference between blade and blade of the same grain, it is like that every blade, though growing in the same field, or ground, would differ specie from all its fellows; inasmuch as it is no ways probable but that there constantly is some difference, more or less, between the respective rootings of every particular com that is sown in the same field. Yea, there is little question to be made, but that some individuals of the same seed, sown in the same ground, suppose the best and richest ground of all, may have, yea, and have commonly so slight and faint a rooting, that heat and drought will cause it to wither away before the harvest. Therefore no specifical difference can be inferred between faith and faith, from a

gradual difference in their rootings. If it be yet further objected, The faith of the stony ground yielded no fruit; whereas the faith of the good ground is said to bring forth fruit with patience. Doth not this argue a specifical difference between them? I answer, Neither: yea, those very words, with patience, which are distinguishing, clearly imply, that the faith of the stony ground did bring forth fruit also; and that it came short of the good ground only in this, that this brought forth fruit with patience, (*i. e.* the fruitfulness of it was not extinguished by any persecutions or sufferings from the world,) whereas the fruitfulness of the other gave up the ghost through fear of sufferings. And indeed had not this stony ground been some ways fruitful, and made such a profession of the gospel which rendereth men obnoxious to persecution from the world, there had been no cause why it should either have suffered or feared persecution. Besides, fruitfulness and unfruitfulness make no specifical or essential difference between subject and subject, more than strength and weakness, speech and silence argue one man to differ specie from another. If they did, the same tree that beareth fruit one year and is barren another should differ specie from itself; yea, and the faith of true believers themselves, who, according to the known sense of our adversaries themselves, may go astray like lost sheep, and live for a long time together in ways of the greatest unworthiness, without repentance, all which time their faith must needs be unfruitful, should come in time to differ specie from itself.

The last objection, which I think knows how to appear against the truth of the faith of the stony ground or temporaries in the parable, is this: True faith, such as was found in those resembled by the good ground, always includes a purpose of heart to bear the cross of Christ, and suffer persecution: But the faith of the temporaries wanted this property; Therefore it was not true faith, but another kind of faith essentially distinct from it. To this also we answer,

1. That true faith doth not in the precise or formal conception of it include such a purpose of heart as the objection speaks of; nor can such a thing be proved, either from the Scriptures or from any sound principle of reason. That such a purpose is seminally or virtually included in true faith, may be granted. But,

2. That such a purpose of heart was not in those that are called temporaries in the parable, cannot be proved: there is no word or clause



herein that doth import it. That they did not take up the cross of Christ when it lay in their way, nor endure persecution for the gospel, doth not at all prove that there was no real purpose in them of doing either. The apostle Paul said of himself: "To will, (i.e. to purpose or intend) is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not," Rom. 7:18.

3, and lastly, Evident it is from other Scriptures, and in part from the parable itself in hand, that such believers who proved temporaries did yet endure persecution for a time. Which plainly proves that they had a true purpose of heart to endure it. Yea, and probably that they had a purpose of heart to endure it unto the end. "Have ye suffered so many things in vain," saith Paul to the Galatians, "if yet it be in vain?" Gal. 3:4. That these Galatians, to whom he bears witness that they had suffered many things for the gospel, were temporaries, appears from those words : "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel," Gal. 1:6. And as the seed that sprang up in the stony ground endured the scorching heat of the sun for a time, before it withered away by means of it; so did the believers portraited hereby suffer persecution a while before their faith expired. So that the faith of those who in the parable are called temporaries can by no argument or allegation be evicted of any degenerateness, or unsoundness in kind, but only of a deficiency in point of rooting or firm fixation in the soul. Nor doth our Saviour any ways blame or reprove it but upon this account only. Yea, in blaming it upon this account only, and reprovng those who had it for being no more diligent and careful in the use of means for con- fining and establishing themselves better in it, he plainly gives testimony unto it in point of truth and soundness; inasmuch as no man deserveth blame for not consulting or endeavouring the perpetuation of an hypocritical faith in his soul, or such, which though persevered in, would yet have left him in the hand of eternal death.

These considerations and discussions are so full of light, evidence, and power, that were not the foot of our adversaries held in this snare to judge of the truth and soundness, and so of the hollowness and unsoundness of faith, by the issue and event of it, as, viz. the perseverance or non-perseverance of it unto the end, they could not lightly stand in the way of their present judgments before them. And yet this rule or method of judging is not of any good accord with their own principles otherwise. Concerning "those helps or assistances of grace," say our English divines

present in the Synod of Dort, “which are afforded by God unto men, we are to judge of them,” (meaning in point of sufficiency or efficaciousness) “by the nature of the benefit offered,” (as attainable by them) “and by the most manifest word of God, *not by the event* or abuse of them.” The last proof from the Scriptures, which we shall, at present, insist upon and urge for the confirmation of the doctrine under protection, shall be that passage which holds forth these things unto us. “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those who were *clean escaped* from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and therein overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb: the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,” 2 Pet. 2:18, &c. The possibility of a total and final defection in true believers lieth as large and full in these quarters as truth lightly can be lodged in words ; the Holy Ghost here plainly supposing that which is clearly consistent with, yea, and equivalent thereunto, viz. that they who by the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, have clean (or truly or really, GREEK) escaped the pollutions of the world, being again entangled therewith, may be overcome, so as that their spiritual state and condition will be worse at the last than it was at the first, or before they believed. What is this, being interpreted, but that true saints or believers may possibly apostatise from their believing condition so as to perish everlastingly?

But here also our adversaries attempt to hide the truth shining in the recited passage under that old covering or veil which hath been rent in twain already, both in this chapter and elsewhere. These expressions, say they, “who were clean escaped from those who live in error, who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, to have known the way of righteousness,” &c. do not suppose the persons spoken of to have had true faith; nor import any thing but what

may very possibly be found in hypocrites. But with how little truth, yea, or semblance of truth, these things are asserted, hath been already exposed to open view, when we traversed the Scripture in hand upon another occasion. (Chap. 8. pp. 215, &c.) Nevertheless we here add,

1. If the said expressions import nothing, but what hypocrites, and that in sensu composito, *i. e.* whilst hypocrites, are capable of, then may those be hypocrites who are separated from men that live in error, and from the pollutions of the world, and that through the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and, on the other hand, those may be saints and sound believers, who wallow in all manner of filthiness, and defile themselves daily with the pollutions of the world. This consequence, according to the principles and known tenets of our adversaries, is legitimate and true, inasmuch as they hold, that “True believers may fall so foul, and so far, that the church, according to Christ’s institution, may be constrained to testify, that they cannot bear them in their outward communion, and that they shall have no part in the kingdom of Christ, except they repent,” &c. But whether this be wholesome and sound divinity or no, to teach, that they who are separate from sinners, and live holily and blamelessly in this present world, and this by means of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, may be hypocrites and children of perdition; and they, on the other hand, who are companions with thieves, murderers, adulterers, &c., saints and sound believers, I leave to men, whose judgments are not turned upside down with prejudice, to determine.

2. The persons here spoken of, are said to have GREEK, truly or really escaped from those who live in error. Doubtless an hypocrite cannot be said, truly or really, but in show or appearance at most, to have made such an escape (I mean from men who live in error,) considering, that for matter of reality and truth, remaining in hypocrisy, he lives in one of the greatest and foulest errors that is.

3. An hypocrite whose foot is already in the snare of death, cannot upon any tolerable account, either of reason or common sense, be said to be allured (*i. e.* by allurements to he deceived) or overcome, by “the pollutions of the world,” no more than a fish that is already in the net, or fast upon the hook, can be said to be allured or deceived by a bait held to her.

4. Hypocrites are no where said, neither can they with any congruity to Scripture phrase be said, to “have escaped the pollutions of the world”

through the acknowledgment (for so the word GREEK should be translated) of Jesus Christ, the acknowledgment of the truth, and so of Christ and of God, constantly in the Scriptures importing a sound and saving work of conversion, as we lately observed in this chapter.

5. and lastly, The persons to whom the apostle addresseth himself in this epistle, being looked upon by him as true believers, yea, as “ partakers of like precious faith ” with himself and the rest of the apostles, 2 Pet. 1:3, it cannot reasonably be imagined that in so short an epistle he should hang so long, as the whole second chapter amounteth unto, upon a subject or discourse which little or nothing concerned them to whom he writes, nor much indeed any other man, if the principles and tenets of our adversaries would stand. If true believers be incapable of any such backsliding, which should make “ their latter end worse than their beginning,” to what purpose should the apostle make a large discourse unto them concerning such men, who had miscarried by such backslidings ? Or would there be, upon such a supposition, any more savour in this discourse, than if Solomon should have made a journey to the queen of Sheba’s court, to inform her that thieves and murderers were sorely punished in his kingdom? And for hypocrites themselves, neither would the discourse have been of much concernment unto them, in case such a personal and peremptory election, and reprobation, as our opposers contend for, could be with truth obtained. If I be upon such terms elected, I am in no danger of falling under that heavy doom of hypocrites, “whose latter end is worse than their beginning;” or if I be so reprobated, I am in no capacity, in no possibility of redeeming myself by the tender of any admonitions, cautions, exhortations, threatenings, or examples whatsoever, of persons who have made shipwreck of their souls against the same rock before me. To what purpose then, he I elected or he I reprobated, be I a sound believer or he I an hypocrite, should any application be made, either by God or men, unto me, either in order to my obtaining of that which all my sin and wickedness cannot keep from me, or for the avoiding or preventing of that from which all my care, diligence, faithfulness, cannot deliver me? Therefore, questionless, the apostle Peter all along that quarter of discourse, which we have lately had under consideration, clearly supposeth that even true believers, such as upon good grounds he concluded those to whom he writes to be, are obnoxious to such an apostasy and declining, in, and from their faith,

which is accompanied with the signal ruin and destruction of those, who value holiness and close walkings with God at no higher rate than to cast them behind their back without looking after them any more. Which doctrinal conclusion might be further argued, and confirmed abundantly, from very many Scriptures, besides those insisted upon in this chapter, and particularly from those frequent and pathetic admonitions, cautions, exhortations, encouragements, &c., administered by the Holy Ghost unto the saints to engage them in such ways of care, diligence, and faithfulness to themselves and their own souls, whereby they may be strengthened to persevere unto the end. But of these, at least of some of the most pregnant of them, we shall have occasion to consider in the chapter following, where we shall further plead the cause of the said doctrine by force of argument and demonstration.

## CHAPTER 13.

**Grounds of reason from the Scriptures, evincing a possibility of such a defection even in true believers, which is accompanied with destruction in the end.**

THE opportunity which error commonly findeth to build herself a throne amongst men, and to reign over the judgments and consciences of those who are debtors of homage and subjection to the truth, lieth not so much in the strength or beauty of those arguments or pleas which she is able to engage in her cause, as either in the weakness or negligence of the friends and professors of the truth; as when they are either not able, or not industrious enough, to show her unto the world, like “Solomon in all his glory, and to spread that light of evidence and conviction round about her which belongeth unto her, and which would commend her like a daughter of God in the eyes of men. Truth, whose native residence and seat is, as the old philosophers were wont to express it, in profundo, in the depths, remote from the common thoughts and apprehensions of men, cannot in many particulars be drawn up into a clear and perfect light, but only by a long cord, well twisted, of much labour, attentive meditation, together with some dexterity for the work. God himself is said to “inhabit a light that is inaccessible, 1 Tim. 6:16; that is, as I conceive, to be capable of more and more glorious attributions, or of having a greater number of excellent thing's, and things of a greater excellency, spoken of him, and that with evidence and clearness of truth, than either men or angels are able to discover or comprehend, much more to utter or declare unto the world. And the truth is that many truths dwell in such a light which is not accessible without much difficulty to the judgments and understandings of men, being only manifestable in their certainty and perfect beauty, by such arguments and considerations which they must dig deep who desire to discover; and they look narrowly and with a single eye who desire to be made fully capable and sensible of them, being set before them. Whereas error, being of nearer affinity to the corrupt and dark minds and understandings of men, dwells in propinquo, and, as it were, at their right hand; and though her servants (the reasons I mean which negotiate her affairs with the judgments of men) be all flesh and

not spirit, all show and no substance, yet having the advantage of a natural sympathy and compliance in those with whom they have to do, their cause is readily accepted, and approved as just and good. When the disciples saw the Lord Christ by no better light than what the night afforded, and that at a distance, walking upon the sea towards them, “they were troubled,” thinking he had been some unclean spirit that would have destroyed them, “and cried out for fear but when he came near them, and “said to them, Be of good comfort, it is I; be not afraid,” Matt. 14:26,27, they perfectly knew that it was their dear Lord and Master. So many looking upon that doctrine which opposeth the unconditioned perseverance of the saints, and asserteth a possibility of their final fall, by the dim light of some sensual principles and apprehensions, and in an overly and superficial manner, as it were at a distance, are much troubled at it, as if it were a doctrine of an anti-evangelical spirit, that would bring them into a bondage of fear, and torment them. Which doctrine, notwithstanding, would they look upon it narrowly, and with an unprejudiced attention, and this by the clear light of such considerations which exhibit it like itself unto them, they would then soon confess to be a doctrine which was set, not at all to curse, but to bless them altogether.

The sole undertaking of this chapter is to commend the said doctrine unto the judgments and consciences of men for a truth, by a proposal of such worthy things which relate to it, either by way of causality or affinity in truth. In the first place, I plead the cordial sympathy it hath with that righteousness of God which the Scripture calls GREEK, or a non-acceptation of persons, thus:

That doctrine which rendereth God free from that unrighteousness which the Scripture calls a respecting the persons of men, is a doctrine of perfect consistency with the Scriptures and the truth.

The doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints declining, and this unto death, is a doctrine of this import. Ergo.

The reason of the former proposition is plain, inasmuch as the Scriptures frequently assert that principle of non-respecting persons, most worthy “the Judge of all the earth,” unto God, Deut. 10:17 ; Gal. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17, &c. The latter proposition needeth no laboriousness of proof neither. Evident it is that the doctrine here spoken of, representeth God as a non-respecter of persons, inasmuch as it rendereth him a Judge of the same righteous severity against the enormous transgressions of his

own children and friends which he exerciseth towards his enemies, and those that are strangers unto him, upon the like provocations. This doctrine subjected saints as well as others to this righteous law of God: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. 6:9; meaning, as is evident from other Scriptures, without repentance. Whereas the common doctrine of perseverance exempteth all such who have at any time been true believers, or children of God, from the penalty or doom of this law; teaching that though such as these should turn "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers," &c., and continue never so long in these abominations, without repentance, yet they retain their right and title of inheritance in the kingdom of God, and that they remain under the greatest love that God can show or bear towards men, the love of election and of children, even in the midst of these deep and desperate provocations. And thus it maketh God the greatest acceptor of persons in the world, rendering him implacably severe towards lesser sinners, and indulgent above measure to the greater. For that such who have, or have had, the knowledge of God, and have believed in Jesus Christ, and made profession of love and service to him, when they turn "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers," &c., are far greater sinners than men committing the same sins "in ignorance and unbelief," is, I think, no man's doubt or question. Certain I am that the Scripture still representeth God as more severe in punishing where greater means of righteousness and well doing have been vouchsafed. "You," said he to his own people, the children of Israel, of old, "only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities," Amos 3:2. In the Gospel: "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required," &c. Luke 12:47,48. It cannot be denied (and confessed it is by our adversaries themselves, as hath been formerly observed) hut that true believers have fallen into the practice of the foul transgressions mentioned, yea, and have remained impenitent in them for a long season. Therefore, if during the time of such practice and impenitency, they should not be in the same, or worse condition, to God-ward and



salvation-wise, than ignorant persons, and such who were always strangers unto God, are, when they live in the same impieties, God must needs be “an acceptor of persons” in the highest, and show a thousand times more favour to grand and signal delinquents than to ordinary and lighter offenders, in comparison. So that to pretend, though true believers may, and oft do, fall, into the fore-named sins, and continue for a time in them without repentance, yet God always reneweth them by repentance before their death, (though this was never yet proved, nor ever will be,) it doth not at all salve the honour of the said doctrine. Because, such a supposal notwithstanding, the persons contended about may and do, according to the tenor of the premises lately proved, suffer a total eclipse and intercision of the grace and favour of God in the mean season.

Secondly, for a possibility of the saints’ defection, either total, final, or both, I thus argue:

If the common doctrine of perseverance rendereth the ministry of the gospel, so far as it concerneth the perseverance of the saints, vain, impertinent, and void, then it is not a doctrine of God, but of men; and, consequently, that which opposeth it is the truth: But certain it is, that the said doctrine is of this unchristian tendency and import: Ergo.

The consequence in the major proposition is pregnant of truth: inasmuch as the preservation of the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, is one of the most considerable ends of the ministry of the gospel, about the effecting whereof it is mainly conversant. Therefore if God, who hath ordained the ministry of the gospel for the advancement of this end, should assert any such doctrine, which rendereth it unnecessary and impertinent, in reference to this end, he should be divided in himself, and pull down with one hand what he buildeth up with another.

The minor proposition is demonstrable, thus: That doctrine which rendereth the labour and faithfulness of a minister in pressing such exhortations, threatenings, and promises, which tend to the preservation of the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, useless, rendereth the ministry of the gospel, as far as it concerns the encouragement or enabling of the saints to persevere, needless and vain: But guilty of such a tendency as this, is the commonly received doctrine of perseverance: Ergo.

The truth of the major proposition here, shineth clearly enough with its own light: or, however, there is this reason for it, viz. because

ministers of the gospel can have little else from the Scriptures, but only exhortations, threatenings, and promises, whereby to build or effect the perseverance of the saints. Therefore if the pressing, or putting on of these upon men, be needless, in reference to such an end, certainly their ministry, as far as it relates to this end, is needless also. The minor is thus proved: The common doctrine of perseverance requireth and commandeth all saints, or true believers, to be fully persuaded, and this with the greatest and most indubitable certainty of faith, that there is an absolute and utter impossibility, either of a total or final defection of their faith; and that though they should fall into ten thousand enormous and most abominable sins, and lie wallowing in them like a swine in the mire, yet they shall remain all the while in an estate of grace, and that God will, by a strong hand of irresistible grace, bring them off from their sins by repentance, before they die: But that doctrine which requireth and commandeth all this, and much more of like import, to be confidently believed by true believers, rendereth the pressing of all exhortations, threatenings, promises upon them, in order to prevail with them, or to make them careful to persevere, bootless and unnecessary: Ergo.

The major, in this syllogism, is the known voice of the common doctrine of perseverance. The reason of the minor is, because a certain knowledge and persuasion that God will, by an irresistible hand of power, preserve a man in the state of grace, how desperately careless, negligent, or wicked soever he shall be, clearly dissolves the usefulness and necessity of all other means whatsoever, in reference to this end. If I know certainly, that the corn which I have sown in my field will, whether I wake or sleep, grow and prosper, would it not be a very impertinent address for any man to come to me, and admonish me in a serious and grave manner, to take heed I sleep not, but keep myself waking, lest my corn should not grow or prosper, or that it may grow and prosper? If my corn grows, thrives, and prospers, by the irresistible hand of God, in the course of his natural and standing providence, my watchfulness, in order to a procurement of these things, is absolutely vain. This is a truth, which prejudice and partiality themselves cannot lightly but subscribe; viz. that there is no force, power, or authority in such an exhortation, wherein we are pressed to use means, either for the avoiding or escaping of such a danger, which we are upon sure grounds persuaded cannot possibly fall upon us ; or for the performance of what we are assured, upon the like

terms of certainty, that we cannot but perform, or that God himself will certainly, by an irresistible and unfrustrable hand of grace perform and work in us. So, again, that there is no efficacy or power in such a threatening, which threateneth us with such an. evil or danger, which we infallibly know ourselves out of all possibility of suffering or falling under. And, lastly, that there is no weight or quickening power in such a promise, wherein only such a benefit or blessing is promised unto us upon the performance of a condition, which we infallibly know to be ours before the condition be performed, yea, and which we are most certainly assured we shall not, we cannot, upon any terms whatsoever, be deprived of. That which is commonly pleaded to salve the consistency of the common doctrine of peremptorily-decreed perseverance, with an usefulness or necessity of the exhortations, threatenings, and promises mentioned, hath neither any logical nor theological virtue in it for such a purpose. For, is it any other than this, viz. that the exhortations, comminations, and promises which we speak of, are means appointed by God, and used by him accordingly, for the accomplishment and effecting of that perseverance in the saints, which he hath made simply and absolutely necessary by his decree ? Now that such a notion as this is altogether irrelative to the business, the accommodation whereof it pretendeth, will be made evident, by weighing the particulars severally.

First, That the exhortations, wherein the saints are exhorted unto perseverance, are no means by which the promises of perseverance, made, as our adversaries suppose, unto them, are accomplished or effected, is thus clearly evinced: Whatsoever is a means for the bringing of any thing to pass, ought not to contain any thing in it repugnant or contrary unto that which is intended to be brought to pass by it; for means ought to be subordinate to their ends, not repugnant: But the Scripture exhortations unto perseverance contain that which is repugnant to the promises of perseverance, if supposed such, as our adversaries suppose them to be: Therefore they can be no means to effect these promises. The minor is evident by the light of this consideration. Such exhortations as these unto the saints, "Take heed lest at anytime there be an evil heart of unbelief in you, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, lest you fall from grace, lest you receive the grace of God in vain, lest you fall from your own stedfastness," &c. in their native and proper tendency import a danger, and serve to raise a fear in men,

lest the danger imported should come upon them. Whereas such promises as these made unto the same persons, and that unconditionally, as is supposed, that there shall never be a heart of unbelief in you, that you shall never be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that you shall never fall away from the grace of God, &c. exclude all danger, yea, or possibility of falling away, and tend directly to prevent or extinguish all fear in men of any such danger. Therefore such exhortations are in their very natures and genuine import, contrary to such promises in theirs; and, consequently, can be no means of bringing them to pass.

Again, if such exhortations as we speak of, be a means to effect that perseverance, which our adversaries suppose to be promised unto the saints, then must the act of perseverance in the saints necessarily depend upon them, so as that it cannot, or will not, take place or be effected without them, *i. e.* without the saints' submitting of themselves unto them. But persevering upon these terms clearly supposeth a possibility of a non-persevering. For whatsoever dependeth upon a mutable condition, and which possibly may not be performed, may itself as possibly never come to pass.

If it be said, that the said exhortations are means of the saints' persevering, in this respect; viz., because God by his Spirit irresistibly, or infrustrably, draws and persuades the saints to obey these exhortations, as means of their persevering; I answer,

1. It cannot be proved that God doth draw or persuade his saints, upon any such terms, to obey these exhortations. Nay, frequent experience sheweth, and our adversaries' own doctrine (frequently mentioned) expressly granteth, that the saints many times are so far from obeying these exhortations, that they walk for a long time in full opposition to them, as in security, looseness, vile practices, &c. Nor have they yet proved, nor, I believe, ever will prove, but that they may walk, yea, and that many have thus walked, I mean, in full opposition to the said exhortations, to their dying day.

2. If God by his Spirit irresistibly draws his saints to obey the exhortations we speak of, he thus draweth them, either by such a force or power immediately acted upon their wills, by which they are made willing to obey them, or else he maketh use of the said exhortations so to work, or affect their wills, that they become willing accordingly. If the former be asserted, then,

2.1. The said exhortations are no means whereby the perseverance of the saints is effected, but God alone, and immediately, by his Spirit; For if the will be immediately affected by God after such a manner, or brought to such a bent and inclination, as that it cannot but obey the said exhortations, *i. e.* do the things which the said exhortations require, then would it have done the same things, whether there had been any such exhortations in being, or no; and consequently, these exhortations could have no manner of efficiency about their perseverance. For the will, according to the common saying, is, of itself, *caeca potentia*, “a blind faculty,” and follows its own predominant bent and inclination, without taking knowledge whether the ways or actions towards which it stands bent, be commanded, or exhorted unto by God or no.

2.2. If the will of a saint be immediately so affected by God, that it stands inclined and bent to do the things which are proper to cause them to persevere, then is this bent and inclination wrought in the will of such a person, after his being a saint; and consequently is not essential to him as a saint, but merely accidental and adventitious. And if so, then is there no inclination or bent in the will of a saint, as such, or from his first being a saint, to persevere, or to do the things which accompany perseverance; but they come to be wrought in him afterwards. Which, how consistent it is with the principles, either of reason, or religion, or their own, I am content that my adversaries themselves shall judge.

2.3. If God doth immediately and irresistibly incline, or move, the wills of the saints to do the things which accompany perseverance, the said exhortations can be no means of effecting this perseverance. For the will being physically and irresistibly acted and drawn by God to do such and such things, needeth no addition of moral means, such as exhortations are, (if they be any,) in order hereunto. What a man is necessitated unto, he needeth no further help or means to do it.

2.4, and lastly, for this, The things which accompany perseverance import a continuance in faith and love unto the end. If, then, the wills of the saints be immediately and irresistibly moved by God thus to continue (I mean in faith and love) unto the end, what place is there for exhortations to come in with their efficiency, towards their perseverance? Need they be exhorted to continue in faith and love, or to persevere, after the end? Thus, then, we clearly see that the former of the two consequences mentioned cannot stand. God doth not by his Spirit irresistibly draw or

move the wills of the saints to do the things which are necessary for the procuring their perseverance, immediately, or without the instrumental interposure of the said exhortations.

Secondly, Neither can the latter of the said consequences stand. God doth not make use of the said exhortations to influence or affect the wills of the saints upon any such terms, as hereby to make them infallibly, infrustrably, necessitatingly willing to persevere, or to do the things upon which perseverance dependeth. For,

1. If so, then one and the same act of the will, should be both physical and moral; and so be specifically distinguished, in and from itself. For so far as it is produced by the irresistible force or power of the Spirit of God, it must needs be physical, the said irresistible working of the Spirit being a physical action, and so not proper to produce a moral effect. Again, as far as the said exhortations are means to produce or raise this act of the will, or contribute any thing towards it, it must needs be moral; because exhortations are moral causes, and so not capable of producing natural, physical, or necessary effects. Now then, if it be impossible that one and the same act of the will should be both physical and moral, that is, necessary and not necessary, impossible also it is, that it should be produced by the irresistible working of God, and by exhortations, in a joint efficiency.

It may be objected, They who hold, or grant such an influence, or operation of the Spirit of God upon the will, which is frustrable and resistible, do, or must suppose it to be, a physical action, as well as that which is irresistible. If so, then the act of the will, so far as it is raised by means of this action, or operation of God, must, according to the tenor of the former argument, be physical also; and so the pretended impossibility is no more avoided by this opinion than by the other. I answer,

Though such an operation of God upon the will, as is here mentioned, be, in respect of God, and of the manner of its proceeding from him, physical, yet in respect of the nature and substance of it, it is properly moral, because it impresseth or affecteth the will upon which it is acted, after the manner of moral causes properly so called, *i.e.* persuadingly, not ravishingly, or necessitatingly. When a minister of the gospel in his preaching, presseth or persuadeth men to such and such duties or actions, this act, as it proceedeth from him, I mean, as it is raised by his natural abilities of understanding and speaking, is physical or natural,

but in respect of the substance or native tendency of it, it is clearly moral, viz. because it tendeth to incline or move the wills of men to such or such elections, without necessitating them hereunto, and so comports with those arguments or exhortations, in their manner of efficiency, by which he presseth or moveth them to such things. By the way, to prevent stumbling and quarrelling, it no ways followeth from the premises, that a minister by his preaching, and persuading unto duties, should do as much as God himself doth, in, or towards a persuading of men hereunto; it only followeth that the minister doth co-operate with God, (which the apostle himself affirmeth, 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1,) in order to one and the same effect, *i. e.* that he operateth by one and the same kind of efficiency with God, viz. morally, or persuadingly, not necessitatingly. For when one necessitates, and another only persuades, they cannot be said to co-operate, or to work the one with the other; no more than two, when the one runs, and the other walks a soft pace, can be said to go or walk together. But when two persuade to one and the same action, one may persuade more effectually by many degrees than the other, may have a peculiar act or method of persuading above the other.

But it may be further objected, If that act of God, by which he affecteth or moveth the wills of men, be in any consideration physical, must it not thus far, and in this respect, have a physical effect assignable unto it? If so, what effect of this kind can we assign unto that act of his we speak of, unless it be the determining or necessitating of the will to that action or course whereunto it is moved by it? I answer,

1. They who make the act of God, inquired after in this demand, merely and solely physical, do not suppose the effect which they ascribe to it, I mean the necessitating of the will to that election, whereunto it moveth, to be a physical effect, but moral, affirming (but with what consistency, either with reason or truth, I understand not) that the will, though necessitated by God, is yet free in her election of that whereunto she is so necessitated, whereby they conceive the morality of the action saved.

But,

2. The physical or necessary effect which answers that physical act, or efficiency of God upon the will, (now under consideration,) is that inclining or moving impression towards such or such an election, which is acted upon the will by this act of his, together with the persuading force or weight of the exhortation, wherein or wherewith he so inclineth, or at

least attempteth to incline it. Thus far and in this sense it is granted, That the act of God, whereby he inclines or moves the wills of men, either to believe or to persevere believing, is irresistible or infrustrable, *i. e.* men cannot hinder or prevent those moving impressions unto good, in one kind or other, which God is pleased at any time to impart unto them or to act upon their wills, though they may hinder and prevent the further and full prevailing of them to that desirable end or issue, which is intended by God in and by them. As the Jews of old could not hinder or prevent God from rising early, and sending his prophets unto them, to call them by promises and threatenings to repentance, but they could and did hinder and prevent the desired event and success of these applications of God unto them which was the actual reducement of them to repentance. It is true they neither did nor could hinder or prevent that secondary end, as we may call it, or intention of God, in these applications of himself unto them, which was, to render them inexcusable, and more worthy punishment, in case they remained still impenitent. Nor is it in the power of men to frustrate, disappoint, or defeat the like intentions of God in his administrations of grace unto them. If they receive this grace of his in vain, or so as not to believe, not to be converted, not to persevere by it, they will be, will they, nill they, altogether inexcusable, and deeply obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of God, who will take vengeance on them accordingly.

3. If God makes use of Scripture exhortations unto perseverance, to cause the saints irresistibly and necessitatingly to persevere, then are all his promises made unto them that they shall persevere, or that he will infallibly work perseverance in them, in vain. If a father should first promise with the greatest assurance he could give or make, that he would make his son his heir, and bestow his inheritance upon him, yea, and should earnestly press and persuade this son of his to believe and expect as much from him, would it not be very incongruous, or rather indeed ridiculous, for this father afterwards to exhort, admonish, entreat, and beseech this his son, that he would take heed that he lose not the inheritance assured (*i. e.* made past losing) unto him? Indeed if this father should only purpose in himself, though with a purpose absolutely unchangeable to make his son his heir, and not declare his purpose in this behalf unto his son, it might be somewhat prudential in him to admonish and exhort his son to behave himself so, that the inheritance



may not be given away from him. But thus to exhort or admonish him, after a declaration made to him, that he is unchangeably resolved to make him his heir, would be to send him into a far country to fetch that which he certainly knows before he goes is at home. In like manner, if it shall be supposed, that God hath nowhere absolutely promised perseverance unto the saints, though it should be supposed withal that his intent is to work it with a strong and irresistible hand in them, there were some face of reason in it, that he should seriously admonish and exhort them to persevere, though the truth is that even such a dispensation as this, upon due inquiry, will hardly be found a dispensation worthy of God; I mean to exhort men to do that which he intends by a strong hand to necessitate or make them to do. But that first he should enjoin them to believe beyond all question or fear, that they shall persevere, yea, and that he will engage his omnipotency to effect it; and afterwards, with a profession of much love and care over them, shall exhort and admonish them to take heed of falling away, is such a broad solecism in reason, that no considering man can lightly imagine should be incident to a wisdom that is infinite.

Some notwithstanding, to salve the consistency of such a course with principles of wisdom, allege the passage, Acts 27., where Paul, notwithstanding the promise which he had clearly received from the angel, which likewise he made known unto all that were with him in the ship, viz. that there should be no loss of any man's life amongst them, jet when the mariners were about to leave the ship, said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe." From whence they infer that an absolute promise, though declared and made known to the persons concerned in it, doth not take away the usefulness of exhortations for the obtaining of the good things promised. But how irrelative this allegation is to the business in hand, is visible enough by the light of these considerations:

1. It is the generally received opinion of divines, that promises of temporal good things are still conditional, and not absolute; which opinion they maintain upon grounds not easily shaken. Now evident it is, that the promise under question was a promise of this nature and kind, relating only to the preservation of the temporal lives of men.
2. It hath been formerly observed, and that more than once, and confirmed by pregnant instances, that many promises in Scripture, though absolute in form, are yet conditional in matter and meaning. See

Chap. 10. and 11., pages 292, 301, 310, 317. So that from the tenor or form of words wherein the said promise was represented by the angel unto Paul, nothing can be concluded to evince it absolute.

3. Those words of Paul to the centurion and soldiers lately mentioned, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe, undeniably prove the said promise to have been not absolute, but conditional. For in case God should have promised absolutely, and without all exception or condition, that they should have been safe, Paul had plainly contradicted the truth of it, by affirming, not that they should not, but that they could not be safe, otherwise than upon condition of the mariners' abiding in the ship.

4. The apostle exhorts those in the ship, after long abstinence, and weakness thereby, to take meat, and that upon this reason or motive; GREEK i.e for this is for your preservation or safety. Which plainly shows, that notwithstanding the promise made unto Paul, that there should not a hair of any of them fall to the ground, they yet might have perished by over long fasting. Therefore the said promise was not absolute.

5. When by receiving sustenance they had recruited their spirits and recovered strength, by the apostle's direction, as is most probable, they lightened the ship and cast out the lading of it, which was wheat, into the sea, and did other things in order to their preservation. Which is a strong presumption at least, that Paul did not understand the promise made to him concerning the lives of these men, in an unconditioned sense; but thus, that if they were careful and diligent to do what was meet for them to do, in order to their own safety, he would stand by them herein, and prosper it accordingly. As when he promised unto the Jews of old, that he would “Bless them in the city, and bless them in the field, bless them in the fruit of their body, and in the fruit of their ground, of their cattle,” *See.*, Deut. 28:3, 4, &c. His meaning only was, that he would bless and prosper their care and industry in and about these affairs and concernments of theirs ; not that he would absolutely bless them in any of them, I mean, whether they minded or looked after their own welfare in such things or no.

6. If those words of Paul be narrowly scanned, verse 22, “ And. now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship,” it will appear that the meaning of the promise signified unto him by the angel, was not simply or adequately

this, that none of their lives should miscarry ; but that though the ship should miscarry, and be lost, which was declared unto him that it would, yet the lives of none of them should hereby, or upon this occasion, miscarry. And the reason why God so ordered the matter that the ship should be wrecked and lost, notwithstanding all the means used to preserve it, was, that they who went along with Paul in it, might plainly know and understand, not only that their preservation was from God, and that more than in an ordinary way, but that it was vouchsafed to them upon such terms for his servant Paul's sake, who was amongst them; which they could not so well have understood, had the ship come whole and safe into harbour. For then they might very possibly have thought that they had escaped by their own labour and skill.

If it be said, that they might as well think such a thought as this upon that escape which they did make at last, some by swimming, others by laying hold on planks and broken pieces of the ship, &c., I answer, No; for when, 1, They had a fresh experiment that they could not by all their diligence and skill escape shipwreck, but that this, according to Paul's word, had befallen them. And, 2, Saw that they were cast upon an island, which Paul also had foretold them. And, 3, and lastly, That now they were all come safe to land, as Paul had likewise pre-assured them they should, and that by way of a gratuity unto him, according to his expression unto them, verse 24, " And lo, God hath given *thee* all them that sail with thee they could not lightly hut apprehend and conclude, that the preservation and safety of their lives was not the achievement or reward of their own labour or skill, but a special benefit or blessing vouchsafed unto them by God, for his servant Paul's sake. By this discourse it appears how and upon what terms those words of Paul, verse 31, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe," accord with the promise of God made unto him concerning the safety of all that were in the ship with him. The purport of the promise was this, that the ship being wrecked and broken, they should all escape with their lives, because God had given them unto Paul, i. e. had purposed to honour Paul by sparing or preserving them in so imminent a danger. This promise was fulfilled and made good, when, the ship being broken, they came all safe to land. Therefore when some of the mariners went about to leave the ship before it was broken, the apostle told the centurion and the soldiers that they took a course to deprive both themselves and them of that hope and certainty of preservation which

God had promised unto him, and he declared unto them; inasmuch as the intent of that promise was, that they should all be preserved, in case they all continued in the ship until it should be broken. So that in case any of them should leave the ship before it was broken, and attempt their safety in any other way, they left no opportunity or possibility unto God to perform the said promise unto any of them, inasmuch as this promise did not assert the safety of any one, or of any lesser number of them, apart from the rest, but of the whole and entire number of them, and that in case they should be all found together in the ship, when it should suffer wreck and be broken. Nor can there any other reason be given, why Paul should say, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe," but only because their nonabiding in the ship, had left no place or opportunity for the promise of God concerning their safety, to take effect. For that their abiding in the ship, being compelled hereunto by the centurion and soldiers, was any instrumental means of their safety, nowhere appears, nor is it any ways probable; we do not find, that they assisted any of those whose lives were preserved, in, or towards the preservation of them; but that every man shifted for himself, and took the best course he could for his safety, ver. 43, 44. So that the allegation of these words, "Except these abide, &c., to prove the usefulness of exhortations, or the necessity of means, properly so called, for the accomplishment of any absolute promise of God, is as broad an impertinency, as is likely incident to ink and paper.

By the way, to search as near to the bottom of the passage in hand, as we can, when the apostle said to the centurion and soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe," his intent was not simply to deny all possibility of safety unto them, save only upon the abiding of the mariners in the ship ; but to deny all probability or likelihood\* of safety but upon this condition only; inasmuch as there was very little or no hope or likelihood of their escaping with their lives in respect of the imminent dangers wherewith they were now encompassed on every side, in case they had rendered themselves or suffered themselves to have been rendered by any, incapable of that safety which God had revealed himself willing for Paul's sake to grant unto them. And of this safety, as hath been showed, they had been incapable, in case any one of the company had left the ship, before it was broken.

Other Scriptures there are, by which the teachers of unconditional

perseverance conceive they are able to prove a rational consistency between an absolute promise of perseverance, and an exhortation hereunto. Of this sort are these, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,” 1 Cor. 10:12, 13. So again, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,” Philip. 2:12, 13. So the apostle having admonished the Hebrews to take heed of falling away, yet professeth thus concerning them, “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and such as accompany salvation, though we thus speak,” Heb. 6:4, 5, 9. In these and such like places, say they, exhortations unto perseverance, and promises of perseverance, are joined together by the Holy Ghost; therefore men who deny a regular and due consistency between them, impute folly or weakness to the Holy Ghost.

I answer,

1. They are ten degrees nearer to the guilt of the crime specified, who affirm the conjunction mentioned to be found in the said Scriptures, than they who deny the legitimacy of such a conjunction. The incongruity of the conjunction hath been sufficiently evinced: but that any such conjunction is to be found, either in the Scriptures cited, or in any others, is no man’s vision but his who hath darkness for a vision. For,

2. That in none of the places cited, is there any promise of perseverance is evident to him that shall duly consider the tenor and import of them. For,

1. It is one thing to say and teach, that God will so limit, as well the force as the continuance of temptations, that the *saints may be able* to bear them: another to make a promise of absolute perseverance. Yea, those very words, “that ye may be able to bear it,” clearly import that all that is here promised unto the believing Corinthians, is a sufficiency of means to persevere if they will improve them accordingly, not an infallible certainty of their perseverance. And that caveat, “Let him that thinketh that he standeth, take heed,” &c., plainly supposeth a possibility of his falling, who thinketh, upon the best terms and grounds for his thought, that he standeth sure. For that this caveat is not given to hypocrites, or unsound believers, or unto such who please themselves with a loose and groundless conceit of the goodness of their condition God-ward, is

evident, because it were better that such men should fall, from their present standing in a groundless conceit, than continue their standing; nor would the apostle ever have cautioned such to take heed of falling, whose condition was more like to be made better than worse by their falling. And besides to understand the said caveat of loose believers, overthrows the pertinency of it to their cause, who insist upon it, to prove a due consistency between exhortations to perseverance and promises of perseverance, as is evident. If then it be directed to true and sound believers, it clearly supposeth a possibility, at least, of their falling in case they shall not take heed, otherwise their taking heed would be no means, at least no necessary means, of their standing: and further, it supposeth also a possibility at least, of their nontaking heed, or that they might possibly not take heed hereof, otherwise the caveat or admonition had been in vain. Men have no need of being admonished to do that which they are under no possibility to omit. If then the standing, or persevering of the saints, depends upon their taking heed lest they fall, and their taking heed used in this kind, be such a thing which they may possibly omit, evident it is, that there is a possibility of their non-persevering. Again,

2. It is one thing to affirm, that God worketh in men, as to will, so to do, (i. e. to enable men to do, or put in execution what they first will, or to assist them in the doing or execution itself,) another, to promise, or work, infallibly and without all possibility of frustration by men, perseverance. There is little or no affinity between these: but how, and in what sense, God is said to be GREEK, working in men, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, we shall have occasion, God willing, to open more at large in the latter part of this work.

3, and lastly, It is one thing to promise perseverance, another to hope or to persuade ourselves that such or such of our Christian friends will not fall into those horrid sins, from which it is very hard, and next to an impossibility, for them to be renewed by repentance. But such arguments and proofs from the Scriptures as these are, of the two, fitter to harden, or strengthen our wills, in what we hold than to balance our judgments. There is not in all, nor in any one of the Scriptures pretended, the least whisper or breathing of any such promise of perseverance, as our adversaries lift up their imaginations unto. It is true, there are in many places, express promises of such grace, and precious vouchsafements from God unto the saints whereby they shall be enabled, yea, and

whereby they are encouraged to persevere; and if men will call such promises as these promises of perseverance, and explain them according to the true intent and mind of God in them, I shall not contend against the appellation. But for any such promise of perseverance, which should import an impossibility of the saints' falling away, either totally or finally, the Scriptures cited are so far strangers unto, that if they were narrowly examined with their respective contexts, they would be found clearly to import, that unless the saints shall GREEK, quit themselves like men, in comporting with the grace of God exhibited unto them in order to their perseverance, the great evil of apostasy will be their ruin.

And thus we have abundantly evicted the truth of this position, that the received doctrine of perseverance absolutely overthrows all the usefulness, necessity, and rational congruity of such admonitions and exhortations unto perseverance, wherein the Holy Ghost addresseth himself in the Scriptures unto the saints. There is the same consideration of all those most serious and affectionate desires, obtestations, wishes, and complaints, wherein God expresseth himself in the Scriptures unto his saints, either as desirous of their perseverance, whilst yet they stand, or as aggrieved in himself for their backslidings when they fall. That God should seriously exhort or entreat a man to do that which he hath promised unto him, that himself will infallibly work in him, or necessitate him to do, and withal hath commanded him to rest assured with the greatest confidence that may be upon the truth of this promise; and much more, that he should affectionately wish that this man would do that which he shall be necessitated, and that by God himself to do, are dispensations or deportments of so notorious an asystasy and incompartment with an infinite wisdom, that consideration must needs cease from men, whilst they ascribe them unto God.

What we have asserted and proved at large, concerning exhortations unto perseverance, viz. that these are dissented by such promises of perseverance as are commonly formed in the minds and writings of men amongst us, we shall now, with what brevity we can, show, concerning such comminations or threatenings also, wherein God threateneth all those with eternal death, who shall not persevere, and shall prove that these also are infatuated, and rendered unsavoury by the principles of the said doctrine, or at least useless and vain, in respect of any efficiency contributable by them towards, the effecting of perseverance in the

saints. This I demonstrate by the light of this argument:

If the principles of the doctrine we speak of dissolve the efficiency of the said threatenings, towards the end for the accomplishing whereof they are given, then they render them unsavoury, useless, and vain: But the principles of this doctrine are guilty of this offence: Ergo.

The terms of the major proposition are sufficient witnesses of the truth thereof. In order to the proof of the minor, we suppose, 1. That which is evident enough, viz. that the end intended by God, in such threatenings which threaten those that shall apostatise with eternal death, is to prevent apostasy in the saints, and to work, or cause them to persevere. 2. That this is one of the principles of the common doctrine of perseverance; God hath absolutely promised final perseverance unto the saints: and this another; God will certainly, infustrably, and infallibly work this perseverance in the saints. These two things only supposed, the fight of the truth of the said minor proposition breaks forth from between them, with much evidence and power. For 1. If the said threatenings be intended by God, for the prevention of apostasy in the saints, and, consequently, to effect their perseverance, the way or manner wherein this end, intended by God, is to be effected by them, must needs be by their ingenerating or raising a fear or apprehension in the saints of eternal death; it being the native property of fear, mixed with hope, to awaken and provoke men to the use of such means, which are proper to prevent the danger, or evil feared. There is no other way imaginable how, or wherein the threatenings we speak of, should operate towards the perseverance of the saints, or the prevention of their apostasy, but that mentioned, viz. by working in them a fear or dread of the evil threatened. Therefore, 2. Evident it is, that such promises made, and made known unto the saints, by which they are made incapable of any such fear, are absolutely destructive of that efficiency, which is proper to the said threatenings to exhibit towards the prevention of apostasy in the saints, or for the causing of them to persevere. 3, and lastly, It is every whit as evident that such promises, wherein God should assure the saints that they shall not apostatise, but persevere, are apt and proper to render them incapable of all fear of eternal death, and, consequently, are apparently obstructive of, and destructive unto, the native tendency and operativeness of the said threatenings, towards and about the perseverance of the saints. These threatenings can do nothing, contribute



nothing, towards the perseverance of the saints, but by the mediation of the fear of evil in them, upon their non-persevering. Therefore, whatsoever hardens them from this fear, or renders them incapable of it, supersedes all the virtue and vigour which are to be found in these threatenings, for or towards the effecting of their perseverance.

If it be said, that the intent of God in the threatenings we speak of, is not to draw the saints by the fear of the punishment or evil threatened, to do the things which accompany perseverance, but that they are moved and drawn hereunto by a more heavenly principle, as viz. the pure and mere love of God, I answer,

1. By demanding what other intent can it be imagined that God should have in the threatenings specified, but only that asserted? Evident it is, as was lately observed, that they are not directed unto hypocrites, or unsound believers: these are not threatened with the loss of salvation, or with eternal death, in case they shall not persevere unto the end. They are in danger of losing the one, and gaining the other, by persevering (in the way they are in) unto the end, not by non-persevering or by departing from it. Besides, hypocrites and counterfeit believers, being at present in a state of wrath, and in a way of perishing, it is no ways agreeable with the wisdom of God, that he should threaten them with perishing, upon the account of such a sin, under the guilt whereof they were never like to come. And evident it is, from Heb. 6:4—6, and 9; and so from Heb. 10:26, 27, 29, and other places, that such threatenings as are now under consideration, were directed and administered unto such as were at present true believers, and in a state of life. If, then, the threatenings we speak of, be directed by God unto true and sound believers, it must consequently be conceived, that they were directed unto them for good, or with an intent on God's part to accommodate and bless them in one kind or other. "I will hear," saith David, "what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not (or, that they may not: see Piscator upon the place) turn again unto folly." Psa. 85:8. "He will speak peace unto his people," &c., *i. e.* he will speak only such things which have a proper and kindly tendency to do them good, and to procure their peace and welfare. If so, then must the threatenings we speak of be, in respect of the intentions of God, of a gracious import unto believers, to whom, as hath been said, they are administered. Which gracious import cannot be conceived to stand in any

other thing but only in that powerful aptness which is so apparently visible in the said threatenings, to cause the persons to whom they are directed, through fear of the sore evil threatened, to bethink themselves how and by what means they may escape it, and to engage them accordingly in the use of them; there being no virtue, property, or tendency in these threatenings to affect or work upon those whom they concern in any other way than this. From whence it clearly follows, that it is no ways unworthy the greatest saints, or soundest believers under heaven, to act in order to their salvation out of a principle of fear, lest by their negligence they should deprive themselves of so invaluable a treasure; inasmuch as in such a course and method of acting as this they conform themselves to that gracious counsel and advice which God, out of his signal love and care over them, hath recommended unto them. And upon these very terms our Saviour expresseth himself to his apostles, who were saints of the highest elevation, and the first born of his delight: "And I say unto you, *my friends*, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall *fear*: *fear him* which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, *fear him*." Luke 12:4, 5. Therefore certainly it is no ways unlawful, no, nor matter of disparagement or dishonour in the least, to the greatest friends or lovers of God and of Jesus Christ, to act righteously out of a principle of fear of being "cast into hell" by God for unrighteousness. That pronoun relative, "who" or "which," ("*which*, after he hath killed," &c.) is not so much descriptive in the sentence as ratiocinative or causal; *i. e.* it imports the reason or motive of that counsel which our Saviour here gives his disciples of fearing God, to be, his "power of casting into hell." Which is further manifest by the force of the same particle in the opposite clause of the passage, "Be not afraid of them *which*," or who, "kill the body," &c. Our Saviour's intent in these words was not so much to describe those whom he would not have his disciples to fear, viz. men, but to assign a ground or reason why they should not fear men, viz. because they had "power only to kill the body." In the original, the said relative particle doth not appear in either of the clauses mentioned, but the force and import assigned unto it in both are here more significantly implied by the use of the participle in both; it being a known propriety of the Greek tongue to import the reasons or grounds of things by their participles. See 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 6:6; 10:26, 28, 29.

2. Though the saints and true believers do many things, and should do more, out of a principle of love to God, yet are they not bound to wave or decline the influence or assistance of other principles which incline and lead them to the same actions and ways with the love of God. For in this case also that of Solomon is true, “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow —and if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him,” &c. Eccles. 4:9, 10, &c. The fear of evil threatened is as natural and genuine a fruit of faith as love itself, yea, and of very choice acceptance with God. “By faith,” saith the apostle, “Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved with fear*, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Heb. 11:7. So that men may “condemn the world,” and save themselves and others, as well by actions done out of a principle of fear as of love. “Because thine heart was tender,” saith God to king Josiah, by Huldah the prophetess, “and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have *heard thee*, saith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace,” &c. 2 Kings 22:19, 20. By these, and many more instances of like consideration, which may readily be added, it fully appears that the holiest and best of men, yea, even the greatest friends and lovers of God, and those that have acted as much and as freely out of a principle of love at other times as any, have yet been afraid of the judgments and displeasure of God threatened, yea, and suffered themselves to be conducted and carried out by the hand of this impression to such actions and ways, for the preservation of themselves and others, wherein they were accepted with God, and found peace and safety for both. Yea,

3, and lastly, The present state and frame of the hearts and souls of the saints, duly considered, which are made up as well of flesh and corruption as of spirit and grace, the former having need of bridles for restraint, as well as the latter of spurs for quickening; evident it is, that arguments or motives drawn from fear of punishment are as necessary and proper for them in respect of the one, as incitements from love in respect of the other. “A whip for the horse;” saith Solomon, “a bridle for

the ass, and a rod for the fool's back." Prov. 26:3. The flesh, even in the wisest of men, is a fool, and would be unruly without a rod ever and anon shaken over him. Nor should God have made such gracious, bountiful, and effectual provision for the perseverance of the saints, as now he hath done, had he not engaged as well the passion of fear within them as of love to be their guardian and keeper. It is true, perfect love casteth out fear," 1 John 4:18; but who amongst the saints themselves can say either that his heart is clean, or his love perfect? "Perfect love casteth out" flesh as well as fear; yea, true love, until flesh be "cast out," preserveth fear for its assistant and fellow helper. The flesh would soon make love a wanton, and entice her unto folly, did not fear dissolve the enchantment, and protect her chastity. But enough of this.

Notwithstanding, if it he yet further demanded, But doth it not argue servility in men to he drawn by the iron cord of the fear of hell to do what is their duty to do ? Or doth any other service or obedience become sons and children but only that which is free, and proceedeth from love ? I answer,

1. If the great lawgiver, God, judged it not unworthy of him or his wisdom to persuade and press obedience to his laws, and that as well upon true believers, and such who are his children by faith, as upon others, (as we lately showed from Luke 12:4,) by arguments drawn from fear of punishment, they have no reason to judge it unworthy of them to suffer themselves to be persuaded and wrought upon accordingly. Nay, doubtless, if the Lord Christ commands or requires of us to "fear him who, when he hath killed, is able to cast both body and soul into hell," and that upon this very account, as we lately interpreted the place, we shall not be found obedient children unto him unless we do fear accordingly.

2. There is a very different consideration of the obedience of children to their natural parents, and of the obedience of the children of God unto their heavenly Father. The obedience of the former, is taught by the inspiration of nature, and is an act, not so much raised by deliberation, or flowing from the will by an interposure of the judgment and conscience to produce the election, as arising from an innate propension in men, accompanying the very constituting principles of their nature or being: whereas the latter, the obedience of the children of God, is taught by precept, and the principle of it, I mean that obediential frame of heart out

of which they subject themselves unto God, planted in the souls of men by the engagement of reason, judgment, and conscience, to consider those grounds, arguments, and motives, by which their heavenly Father judgeth it meet to work and fashion them unto such a frame. So that though the obedience of natural children to their natural parents, be the more gemline and commendable, when it flows freely from the pure instinct of nature, and is not drawn from them by fear of punishment; yet the obedience of the children of God is then most genuine, commendable, and like unto itself, when it is produced and raised in the soul by a joint influence, and contribution, not of one, or of some, but of all those arguments, reasons, motives, inducements, whatsoever, and how many soever, they be, by which their heavenly Father desires to plant and work it in them. For in this case, and in this only, it hath most of God, of the Spirit of God, of the wisdom of God, of the goodness of God in it: and upon this account is likeliest to be most free, uniform, and permanent. Therefore,

3. and lastly, That service or obedience unto God, which is exhibited and performed unto him, either out of a desire and hope of that great recompense of reward, salvation, or out of a fear of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, upon disobedience, is not to be termed mercenary, or servile, merely or simply because such a hope, or such a fear, are interested in the raising or procurement of it, unless withal all the exhibition and performance of it be burdensome, grievous, and offensive unto those who do perform it. For men may act as willingly, as freely, as cheerfully, as contentedly, out of a principle of hope, yea, and of fear itself also, as from love itself; yea, and more willingly and freely, from the two former, than from the latter, unless the principle of love be advanced to a very considerable degree, height, and power in men. There is no reason but to judge that Noah went about the mating of his ark, and continued in the work until the finishing of it, with as much willingness, cheerfulness, and contentment of mind, as he performed any other act of obedience unto God, at any time, notwithstanding, as the Scripture informs us, he was moved thereunto through fear. Heb. 11:7. Nor is it credible but that Paul followed the work of mortification, keeping under his body, and bring it into subjection, with all willingness, freeness, cheerfulness, and contentment, though he was engaged and provoked hereunto by a “fear, lest by any means when he had preached the gospel

unto others, he himself should prove a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9:27, or reprobate.

If that of the apostle John be objected, fear hath torment,” 1 John 4:18, and a demand made upon it, how can a man act willingly, or freely, out of such a principle, which hath pain, or torment, in it? I answer,

That fear, of which John speaketh, and which he saith hath pain, or torment in it, is such a fear, which hath little, or no hope, in conjunction with it. For such a fear, which is accompanied with a certainty of hope, that by the use of such and such means, which he is sure he shall, or may have, if he please, especially the use of these means being otherwise honourable and delightful unto him, the evil feared shall be prevented; such a fear, I say, as this, hath little or no pain, or torment, in it at all. Now of this kind is the fear, out of which the children of God many times act, (as with honour and peace, they may;) it is attended with a living hope, that by comporting or co-operating with the grace of God, which they are assured they may, and shall have, for the asking, which co-operation is in itself matter of honour and of delight unto them, they shall be delivered from the great evil feared, which is hell, or the casting out of the presence of God for ever. Though Noah was moved through fear, as we heard, to prepare the ark, for the safety of himself, and his, yet he was as well moved hereunto through faith, as fear. “By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,” &c. Heb. 11:7. “By faith Noah prepared, &c.”

*i.e.* out of a settled persuasion and belief that God would preserve him and his from perishing in the waters, by means of the ark, which he had directed him to make for that purpose, he readily and cheerfully betook himself to the framing and making of it. In like manner, Paul, though he “kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, lest,” (*i. e.* through fear, lest,) “when he had preached unto others, he himself should be a cast-away;” yet was he full of assurance, that by this means, by keeping under his body, &c. he should prevent his being a cast-away, and remain for ever in the love and favour of God ; upon the account of which assurance, notwithstanding his fear, he rejoiced that “joy unspeakable and glorious, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God,

which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:35, 38, 39. So that that fear and trembling, with, and out of which, the children of God not only lawfully may, but of duty ought, “to work out their own salvation,” Phil. 2:13, or, which is the same, deliverance from condemnation, are not of those kinds, of fear and trembling, which have torment, or expectation of evil, or doubtfulness of safety and well doing, attending them; but of those, which are quickening and provoking to the use of means for safety, upon an apprehension of danger coming upon the negligent and slothful, and accompanied with a peaceable and blessed confidence of obtaining safety thereby. So that we may safely conclude that the threatenings of eternal death in the Scriptures, which are bent against the faces of apostates and backsliders, are a means graciously vouchsafed by God for the preserving of his saints from apostasy, and this by raising a fear of hell within them, in case they shall neglect his counsel for their perseverance: and consequently, that all such threatenings are “turned into stubble and rotten wood,” in the dialect of the Almighty, Job 41:27, I mean are made powerless and useless, by the principles of that doctrine, which teacheth any absoluteness of promise made unto the saints for their final perseverance.

Thirdly, and lastly, as this doctrine evacuateth all the exhortations, and comminations, which the Scripture holdeth forth as means to preserve the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, so doth it all the promises also, which are here given in order to the procurement of the same end: the virtue, efficacy, and power whereof are merely nullified by such a supposition as this, that believers stand bound to believe an absolute impossibility of their final declining, or falling away to perdition. For when men are secured, and this by the infallible security of faith, that the good things promised are already theirs, by the right and title of faith, and that they shall certainly persevere in faith unto the end, what need or occasion is there to persuade or move these men to do that which becomes them, in order to their perseverance, by any argument drawn from the promise of such things? A promise made to a man of having or keeping that which is his own already, and which he certainly knows shall not, cannot be taken away from him, can have no manner of influence upon him by way of excitement, or inducement, to labour for the obtaining of it, or to do the things by which it is to be obtained. For, as the apostle reasons in somewhat the like case, “Hope that is seen, is not

hope,” *i. e.* that which sometimes was the object of hope, when it comes to be seen, or enjoyed, is no longer the object of hope, “for what a man seeth, why,” or, how, “doth he yet hope for ?” Rom. 8:24. So may we argue in the case in hand: a promise of what is already enjoyed and possessed, is no promise; hath not the nature, property, or operation of a promise in it, especially not of a promise engaging unto action, in order to the obtaining of the good promised. A promise of this import, I mean, that is any ways likely to engage unto action, must be of some good thing so conditioned, in relation to him to whom the promise is made, that he hath no ground to expect the enjoyment of it, but upon condition of the performance of such and such an action, one or more. For if such actions and ways, which are proper and requisite for the obtaining of the good promised, be otherwise, and in themselves desirable, and would howsoever be chosen by him to whom the promise is made, evident it is that the promise we speak of doth not in this case work at all upon him, or raise such an election in him. Again, if those actions and ways which are proper and necessary for the obtaining of the good promised, be in themselves unpleasant and distasteful unto the person we speak of, to whom the promise is supposed to be made, it is a clear case, that he will not lift up his heart or hand unto them, but only for the obtaining of such a good and desirable thing, which he hath reason to judge will never be obtained by him, but only by the performance of such things. For who will trouble himself to run for that, which he knows he may and shall obtain by sitting still? Thus then it every way appears that the common doctrine of absolute and certain perseverance, makes nothing but wind and vanity of all those most serious and weighty exhortations, threatenings, and promises in the Scriptures, which concern the perseverance of the saints, and are directed by God unto them for this end and purpose, that by them they may be enabled, *i. e.* made willing, watchful, and careful to persevere, and consequently the very face and spirit of the said doctrine, is directly set and bent against that high concernment of the saints, I mean their perseverance. For whatsoever nullifieth the means, is clearly destructive unto the end. And thus we have done with our second argument, for the confirmation of that doctrine, which teacheth a possibility of the saints’ defection, and this unto death.

A third argument is this. That doctrine which representeth God, as weak, incongruous and incoherent with himself, in his applications unto



men, is not from God; and consequently that which contradicteth it must needs be the truth: But the doctrine of perseverance opposed by us, putteth this great dishonour upon God; represented him weak, incongruous, &c. Ergo. The major proposition in this argument is too great in evidence of truth to be questioned. The minor is made good by this consideration; viz., that the said doctrine bringeth God upon the great theatre of the Scriptures, speaking thus, or to this effect, in the audience of heaven and earth, unto his saints. "You that truly believe in my Son Jesus Christ, and have been once made partakers of my Holy Spirit, and therefore are fully persuaded and assured, according to my will and command given unto you in that behalf, yea, according to that ensealing of truth within you which you have from me, that you cannot possibly, no, not by all the most horrid sins and abominable practices, that you shall or can commit, fall away, either totally or finally, from your faith; that in the midst of your foulest actions and courses there remains a seed of grace or faith within you, which is sufficient to make you true believers, and to preserve you from falling away finally; that it is impossible you should die in your sins; you that know, and are assured, that I will by an irresistible hand, work perseverance in you, and consequently that ye are out of all danger of condemnation, and that heaven and salvation belong unto you, and are as good as yours already, so that nothing but giving of thanks appertains unto you, which also you know that I will, do you what you will in the meantime, necessitate you unto; you, I say, that are fully and thoroughly persuaded, and possessed with the truth of all these things, I earnestly charge, admonish, exhort, and beseech, that you take heed to yourselves, that ye continue in the faith, that there be not at any time an evil heart of unbelief in you to depart from the living God, that you fall not from your own steadfastness. Yea, I declare and profess unto you, that if you shall draw hack, my soul shall have no pleasure in you, that if you shall deny me, I will deny you; that if you be again overcome of the lusts of the world, and be entangled herewith, that your latter end shall be worse than your beginning; that if you shall turn away, all your former righteousness shall not be remembered, but you shall die in your sins, and suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. On the other hand, if you shall continue unto the end, my promise is that you shall be saved. Therefore strive to enter in at the strait gate, quit yourselves like men, labour for the meat that endureth unto

everlasting life, and be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” He that shall duly weigh and consider what a senseless, and, indeed, ridiculous incongruity there is, between these exhortations, adjurations, threatenings, and latter promises, and those declarations, applications, and former promises, doubtless will confess, that either the one or the other of them, are not from God, or according to the mind of God. For how preposterous a thing is it to threaten a man with suffering the vengeance of hell fire, in case he shall not persevere, whom we have charged before confidently to believe that God will irresistibly cause him to persevere, and eternally save him? But the exhortations, threatenings, and latter promises are expressly from God, as our adversaries themselves will not deny; therefore the former applications and promises are the mere notions and conceits of men, and have no foundation in the word of God, and consequently the doctrine of absolute perseverance is to be rejected, as a doctrine rendering the only wise God strangely irrational, and inconsistent with himself.

4. If there be no possibility of the saints’ falling away finally, then is their persevering unto the end incapable of reward from God: But their final perseverance is not incapable of reward from God: Ergo. The minor proposition, I presume, contains nothing but what is the sense of those who deny the conclusion: or however, it contains nothing but what is the express sense of the Lord Christ, where he saith, “But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved,” Matt. 24:13. Therefore we shall, I suppose, be excused from further proof of this, without any prejudice to the cause in hand. The consequence in the major proposition stands firm upon this foundation: no act of the creature, whereunto it is necessitated, or which it cannot possibly decline, or but do, is by any law of God, or rule of justice, rewardable. Therefore if the saints be necessitated by God to persevere finally, so that he leaves unto them no possibility of declining finally, their final perseverance is not according to any law of God or man, nor indeed, according to any principle of sound reason or equity, capable of reward, no whit more than actions merely natural are. Nay, of the two there seems to be more reason, why acts merely natural, as, for example, eating, drinking, breathing, sleeping, &c., should be rewarded, inasmuch as these flow, though in a way of necessity, yet from an inward principle, and connatural to the agent; than such actions,

whereunto the agent is constrained, necessitated, or determined by a principle of power from without, and which is not intrinsical to it. It is true, a prince, or great man may, if he please, bestow gifts of what value he pleaseth upon those who live, breathe, eat, &c., but he cannot be said to reward them for living, breathing, eating, &c., because a reward (in the proper signification of the word) imports a relation to such actions or services, one or more, which were in the power of him to have omitted, or refrained, who performed them. In like manner, God, if he judged it meet, may or might confer life and salvation upon those who shall persevere unto the end, though it should be supposed that they were necessitated by him thus to persevere; but upon such a supposition as this, he could not be said to reward them with life or salvation, for or in respect of such their perseverance, for the reason specified. If we speak of rewards promised in order to the moving or inclining of the wills of men towards such or such actions or ways, (of which kind also the rewards mentioned in the Scriptures as yet remaining to be conferred by God upon men are,) the case is yet more clear; viz., that they are appropriate unto such actions and ways, unto the election and choice whereof men are not necessitated in one kind or other, especially not by any physical or foreign power. For to what purpose should a reward be promised unto me, to persuade or make me willing to engage in such or such a course, or to perform such or such a service, in case I be necessitated unto the same engagement or performance otherways? Or what place is there left for a moral inducement, where a physical necessity hath done the execution, or if the moral inducement hath done the execution, and sufficiently raised and engaged the will to the action, with what congruity of reason, yea, or common sense, can a physical necessity be superinduced? Now, that all the rewards which God, in the Scriptures, promiseth unto perseverance, or unto those who shall persevere, are promised upon this account, viz., to work upon the wills of men, to make them willing and careful to persevere, is a thing so rich in evidence that it needs no proof. When Christ saith to the Church of Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will, give thee a crown of life," Rev. 2:10, can any man reasonably imagine, but that the crown of life is promised by way of motive or encouragement, to make them faithful unto death? In like manner, when in his epistle to the Church of Thyatira, he writeth thus, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power

over the nations,” Rev. 2:26, doth he make this promise of giving power over nations with any other eye or intent, than to raise hereby a spirit of Christian valour and resolution in them, not to give over fighting the good fight of faith unto the end, which, would be the victory or conquest here intended ? Not to instance more particulars, when he speaketh thus to his disciples, “But he that shall endure,” meaning, in the loyalty of his affection unto him and the gospel, “unto the end, the” same shall be saved,” Matt. 24:13, doth he promise salvation, to him that must or shall be necessitated, will he, nill he, to endure unto the end? Or is there any more savour in the promise, thus interpreted, than there would be in such a promise as this, But he that breatheth unto the end, the same shall be saved? Therefore, questionless, our Saviour’s intent in promising salvation unto him that should endure unto the end, was, by this promise of so great a reward to provoke, animate, and encourage men to persevere unto the end. Let all expositors, both ancient and modern, be consulted upon the place. “Although,” saith Calvin upon the place, “the love of many, being surcharged with the weight of iniquities, shall fail, yet Christ admonisheth that this obstacle also (or impediment in their way) must be overcome, lest those that are faithful and believe, being wearied (or tired out) by evil examples, should start back (or recoil from the faith.) Therefore he repeats that saying, that none shall be saved but he that shall strive lawfully, so as to persevere unto the end.” So that his sense clearly is, that salvation is here particularly promised or appropriated by Christ unto perseverance, and consequently, and by way of intimation, destruction threatened against backsliding, to persuade and to prevail with those who do believe so to strive, as to hold out and persevere striving unto the end. The matter is so clear that we shall need to produce no more witnesses. So then, it being evident that final perseverance in the saints is truly and properly rewardable by God, evident likewise it is, by the light of what hath been argued, that it is not any thing physically necessitated upon them, or irresistibly wrought in them, by God, but that it is such a service, or course of obedience unto God, wherein they are volunteers, and the performance whereof is as well in their power to decline as to exhibit.

A fifth reason evincing the same conclusion is this: “They who are in a capacity or possibility of perpetrating the works of the flesh are in a possibility of perishing, and consequently in a possibility of falling away,

and that finally, from the grace and favour of God, in case they be in an estate of this grace and favour at the present: But the saints, or true believers, are in a possibility of perpetrating the works of the flesh : Therefore they are in a possibility also of perishing, and so of falling away from the grace and favour of God wherein at present they stand.” The major proposition in this argument, viz. that they who are in a possibility of perpetrating or customary acting the works of the flesh, are in a possibility of perishing, &c., is clearly proved from such Scriptures which exclude all workers of iniquity, and fulfillers of the lusts of the flesh, from the kingdom of God, of which sort there are many. “Of the which,” saith the apostle, speaking of the lusts of the flesh, adultery, fornication, &c., “I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” Gal. 5:21. So again: “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, or unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,” Eph. 5:5, 6. Yet again: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not ye deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. 6:9, 10. From such passages as these, which are very frequent in the Scriptures, it is as clear as the light of the sun at noon-day, that they who may possibly commit such sins as those specified, adultery, fornication, idolatry, &c., may as possibly perish, and be for ever excluded the kingdom of God.

Now that true believers are under a possibility of perpetrating and committing such sins as these, which was the effect and sense of the minor proposition, is altogether as evident as the former, as both the Scriptures last cited, with their fellows, being in special manner directed unto true believers, as also the sad and frequent experience of such persons as these falling into such sins, do abundantly manifest. Nor is this proposition denied by our adversaries themselves. Therefore, when they deny that the saints, when they commit such sins, do fall away from their faith, do they not grant the premises in a lawful syllogism, and deny the conclusion ?

To pretend that the threatenings of non-inheriting the kingdom of God, in the Scriptures last quoted, are not bent against true believers, or the execution of them intended upon them, though they shall commit the

sins specified, but only against unbelievers, is to set up darkness against light. For,

1. The said passages are all directed to true and sound believers, yea, to these only; or at least to those, and only those, whom the apostle judged to be such. If then this saying, or threatening, “They, that do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” concerns only unbelievers when they do such works, and shall be executed only upon them if they come under the dint of it, to what purpose should it be directed, especially with so much, seriousness and particularity, as it is, unto true believers only? Or what is it to true believers, that God will shut out unbelievers from his kingdom, for the perpetration of such and such sins, if they, these true believers, may commit them without any such danger ?

2. As concerning unbelievers, they are, at least according to the judgment of our adversaries, in an estate of exclusion from the kingdom of God, whether they perpetrate the works of flesh mentioned, or any others like unto them, or no. Their unbelief alone is sufficient matter of exclusion against them. Now how vain a thing, and unworthy the Spirit of God, is it to threaten men with such a punishment, in case they shall commit such or such particular sins, who are at present obnoxious unto it, and shall certainly suffer it, whether ever they shall commit any of these sins or no ?

3. There is not in the said dehortations or threatenings the least intimation of any difference of persons, in respect of their present estates or conditions, but only a designation or nomination of such things which exclude from the kingdom of God.

4. To affirm that God excludeth unbelievers from his kingdom for the committing of such sins which, according to the sense of our adversaries, they have no sufficient power to refrain, and, according to truth, have no such provision or furniture of means to refrain as true believers have; and to affirm withal, that yet he excludeth not believers for such commissions, whom they acknowledge to have sufficient power to refrain them, is to render or represent God notoriously partial or unjust. For he that sinneth, having less means to refrain, is a less sinner, than he that sinneth the same sin or sins, having more or greater. Now to punish, and that with the utmost severity, lesser or lighter offenders, and not only to discharge greater and more heinous-offenders in the same kind, but highly to reward them, the heinousness of their demerits

notwithstanding, is an act of the broadest injustice that lightly can be.

5, and lastly, Though the tenor or form of the said dehortations, or threatenings, in the Scriptures mentioned, be indefinite, and not universal, yet from other passages of the same sense and import with them, where the sign of universality is expressed, it may be clearly evinced that they are in sense and meaning universal, and so comprehensive as well of true believers as unbelievers. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all* liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,” &c. Rev. 21:8. Again: “And there shall *in no wise* enter into it (the new Jerusalem) *any thing* that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or maketh a lie,” &c., ver. 27. In the former of these passages, “*all* liars, and,” consequently, “*all* murderers, and *all* whoremongers,” &c., are adjudged to have “their portion in the lake that burneth with fire,” &c. In the latter, that “*any thing* that defileth, or *whatsoever* worketh abomination, shall *in no wise*,” (GREEK,) or, upon no terms or conditions whatsoever, “enter into the new Jerusalem.” Therefore, when God threateneth and saith, that “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,” &c., “shall inherit the kingdom of God,” evident it is that he includeth as well believers as unbelievers.

If it be objected, But true believers have a promise from God, that they shall never lose their faith, I answer, 1, That this hath oft been said, but never so much as once proved. 2. Upon examination of those Scriptures wherein such promises of God are pretended to reside or to be found, we found no such thing in them. We found, indeed, many promises of perseverance, but all of them conditional, and such whose performance, in respect of actual and complete perseverance, is suspended upon the diligent and careful use of means by men to persevere. See Chap, 11., page 323. And lastly, to affirm that true believers can by no commission of sin or sins whatsoever, how vile, horrid, abominable soever, how frequently reiterated, how long continued in soever, either make shipwreck of their faith, or fall away from the grace and favour of God so as to perish, what is it but to provoke the flesh to an outrageousness in sinning, and to encourage that which remains of the old man in them to bestir itself in all ways of unrighteousness? And doubtless the teaching of that doctrine hath been the casting of a snare upon the world, and hath caused many,

whose feet God had guided into ways of peace, to venture so far in desperateness of sinning, that, through the just judgment of God, their hearts never served them to return. But of these things we spake somewhat more at large, Chap. 9.

Others plead that there is no reason to conceive that true believers, though they perpetrate the works of the flesh, should be excluded from the kingdom of God upon this account, because what they sin in this kind they sin out of infirmity, and not out of malice. I answer,

1. By concession; that there are three several kinds of sin, in the general, which also make so many degrees in sinning, in point of demerit. There are sins of ignorance, and sins of infirmity, and sins of malice. And sins of this last kind we acknowledge to be far greater in demerit than either of the former. But,

2. By way of exception; to say that true believers, or any other men, do or perpetrate the works of the flesh out of infirmity, in strictness of interpretation, involves a contradiction. For to do the works of the flesh, implies the dominion or predominancy of the flesh in the doers of them; which in sins of infirmity hath no place. The apostle clearly insinuates the nature of sins of infirmity in that to the Galatians: “Brethren, if any man he overtaken with a fault, (GREEK, *i. e.* he prevented, or taken at unawares in, or with some miscarriage or sin,) ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness,” &c., Gal. 6:1. When a man’s foot is taken in the snare of a temptation, only through a defect in that spiritual watchfulness over himself and his ways, which he ought to keep constantly, and so sinneth contrary to the habitual and standing frame of his heart, this man sinneth out of infirmity. But he that thus sinneth, cannot, in Scripture phrase, be said, either to “walk or live according to the flesh,” Rom. 8:4, 18, 13, or “to do the works of the flesh,” Gal. 5:8, or “to do the lusts or desires of the flesh,” Eph. 2:3; because none of these are any where ascribed unto, or charged upon true believers, but only upon such persons who are enemies unto God, and children of death.

3. If by sinning out of malice, they mean sinning with deliberation, with plotting and contriving the method and means of their sinning, sinning against judgment, against the dictates of conscience, &c., (and what they should or can mean by sinning out of malice, hut sinning upon such terms as these, I understand not;) certain it is that true believers, or



at least such as were true believers before such sinning, may sin out of malice. Yea, and this our adversaries themselves, forgetful of their own occasion at this turning, other- while plainly enough suppose and grant. Pareus, observing the difference between sin reigning and not reigning, of the former speaketh thus: "Sin reigning, is all (or every) sin in men unregenerate; or in men regenerate, an error contrary to the articles of faith and against conscience, excluding out of the heart actual belief of remission of sins, and making the sinner liable to eternal death, unless he should be forgiven. In one word, sin reigning is to obey the lusts of the flesh. Even those that are regenerate sometimes fall into this sin, as David, Peter: and this the apostle's exhortation witnesseth." And afterwards, speaking of regenerate men and true believers, he grants that they may " mortally, and against the dictate of their consciences, rush (into sin) as Aaron, David, Peter, did;" and saith moreover, that "when they thus sin, they lay waste their consciences, disturb the Holy Ghost, lose the joy of their heart, and incur the wrath of God." Doubtless these are not the symptoms or effects of sins of infirmity; though the author is pleased to say, that which I think pleaseth few men to believe, that the sins of Aaron, David, Peter, were not committed by them, ex contemptu Dei, out of any contempt of God, but out of a preoccupation with or through the infirmity of the flesh. Concerning the sin of David, certain I am that the prophet Nathan, by the word of the Lord, chargeth it upon his despising or contempt of the commandment of the Lord, 2 Sam. 12:9. Ursine is yet more cordial and through in the point. " The most sad falls," saith he, " of holy men, as of Aaron, making the golden calf, for which God being angry was minded to slay him; and of David, committing adultery and murder, to whom Nathan said, Thou art a man of death, do plainly show that even regenerate men may rush (or fall headlong) into reigning sin." And those of the contra-remonstrancy in the conference at the Hague, held anno 1613, confess and teach, that "True believers may fall so far, that the church, according to the commandment of Christ, shall be obliged to pronounce that she cannot tolerate them in her external communion, and that they shall have no part in the kingdom of Christ, except they repent." Therefore certainly their sense was, that true believers may sin above the rate of those who sin out of infirmity, inasmuch as there is no commandment of Christ that any church of his should eject such persons out of their external communion who sin out of

infirmity only. So that by the confession of our adversaries themselves, even true believers may perpetrate such sins, which are of a deeper demerit, than to be numbered amongst sins of infirmity; yea, such sins, for which the church of Christ, according to the commandment of Christ, stands bound to judge them for ever excluded from the kingdom of God without repentance. From whence it undeniably follows, that they may commit such sins, whereby their faith in Christ will be totally wrecked and lost, because there is no condemnation or exclusion from the kingdom of God unto those that are (by faith) in Christ Jesus, whether they repent or not. And therefore they that stand in need of repentance to give them a right and title to the kingdom of God, are no sons of God by faith; for were they sons, they would be heirs also, Rom. 8:17; and consequently have the clearest right and title to the inheritance that is. So that to pretend that however the saints may fall into great and grievous sin, yet they shall certainly be renewed again by repentance before they die, though this be an assertion without any bottom of reason or truth, yet doth it no ways oppose, but suppose rather, a possibility of the total defection of faith in true believers.

Some to maintain this position, that all the sins of true believers are sins of infirmity, lay hold on this shield. "Such men as these," they say, "never sin with their whole wills, or with full consent." Therefore when they sin, they never sin but through infirmity. That they never sin with full consent, they conceive they prove sufficiently from that of the apostle: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," Rom. 7:19, 20. I answer,

1. That the saints oft sin with their whole wills or full consents, is undeniably proved by this consideration, viz. because otherwise there should be not only a plurality or diversity, but even a contrariety of wills in the same person, at one and the same instant of time, viz. when the supposed act of sin is produced. Now it is an impossibility of the first evidence, that there should be a plurality of acts, and these contrary the one unto the other, in one and the same subject, or agent, at one and the same instant of time. It is true, between the first moving of the flesh in a man towards the committing of the sin, and the completing of this sin by an actual and external patration of it, there may be successively in him, not only a plurality, but even a contrariety of volitions, or motions of the

will, according to what the Scripture speaketh, concerning the “flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh but when the flesh, having prevailed in the combat, bringeth forth her desire into act, the Spirit ceaseth from his act of lusting: otherwise it will follow, that the flesh is greater and stronger in her lustings, then the Spirit of God in his, and that when the flesh lusteth after the perpetration of such, or such a sin, the Spirit, as to the hindering of it, lusteth but in vain: which is contrary to that of the apostle John : “ greater is he that is in you,” (speaking, as it is clear, of the Spirit of God, unto true believers,) “than he that is in the world,” 1 John 4:4 ; meaning, Satan, and all his auxiliaries, sin, flesh, corruption, &c.

If it be demanded, But if the Spirit of God in true believers, be greater and stronger in his lustings, then the flesh in his, how cometh it to pass, that in the spiritual duel, the flesh so frequently prevaieth? I answer, The reason is, because the Spirit acts not, at least to the just efficacy of his vigour and strength, but only when his preventing or first motions are entertained or seconded with a suitable concurrence by the hearts and the wills of men ; through a deficiency or neglect whereof, he is said to be grieved or quenched, *i. e.* to cease from other actings, or movings, in men. This truth is the ground of these, and such like sayings, in the writings of Paul: “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” Rom. 8:13, 14. Believers do then mortify the deeds of the body, by the Spirit, when they join their wills unto his in his preventing motions of grace, and so draw, or obtain, further strength and assistance from him, in order to the great and difficult work of mortification. In respect of which concurrence also with the Spirit in his first and more gentle applications of himself unto them, they are said to be led by the Spirit; as by their comportments with him in his higher and further applications, they become filled with the Spirit, according to that exhortation of the same apostle to the Ephesians: “ but be ye filled with the Spirit,” Eph. 5:18; *i. e.* follow the Spirit close in his present motions and suggestions within you, and you shall be filled with him, *i. e.* you shall find him moving and assisting you upon all occasions, at a higher and more excellent and glorious rate. But this by the way. However, by that which hath been now said, it clearly appears that the reason why believers are so frequently overcome by the lustings of the flesh, notwithstanding the

contrary lustings of the Spirit within them before their foil, is not because the flesh hath more strength to lust than the Spirit, but because they, the men, believers, have more will to hearken unto, and to go along with the flesh, in her lustings, than with the Spirit, in his; it being the law, or property of the Spirit, not to advance, or go forward in his exertions of himself, when he is deserted and forsaken in his way, by the wills of men. It is true, after such desertions of him in his motions by the wills of men, he doth not always, wholly and for ever, desert them; but most frequently returns again in his motions and excitements unto them. Only in his first applications unto men, after he hath been so deserted by them, as hath been said, he doth not, I conceive, begin, where he left, but where he began first of all; my meaning is, that he doth not move, or act in them at any such high, or filling rate, as at which he wrought, or was ready to work, when he was forsaken: but according to the line, or proportion, of his preventing motions, which generally are of a cooler and softer inspiration than his subsequent. But thus we see it an apparent error, to say that true believers never sin with their whole wills, or fulness of consent: which yet might be made more apparent, by the consideration of David's case, in and upon his committing of, those two great sins, homicide and adultery. For doubtless had there been any reluctancy of will, or renitency of conscience, or of the Spirit within him, when he committed the former of the two, adultery, he would not have added the second, murder, so soon after, to it. Again, had there been any such reluctancy or renitency in him, as we speak of, when he perpetrated, either the one abomination, or the other, doubtless he could not have digested both the one and the other without any remorse, or self-condemnation, for so long a time together, as passed between the acting' of his said sins, and the time when the prophet Nathan was sent from God unto him to awaken him unto repentance. Which space of time, by the best calculation of divines, was ten months, at the least. From the consideration of which distance of time between David's sin, and his repentance, P. Martyr makes this observation, that " the saints themselves being once fallen into sin, would always remain in the pollution of it, did not God by his mighty word bring them out of it." Which saying of his clearly also implies, that the saints many times sin with their whole wills, and full consents: because, were there any part of their wills bent against the committing of the sin, at the time when it is

committed, they would, questionless, return to themselves, and repent immediately after, the heat and violence of the lust being over, by reason of the satisfaction that hath been given to it. Therefore,

2. To that which was alleged from Rom. 7:19, to prove the contrary, viz. that the saints never sin with their whole wills, or full consent; I answer, 1. That when the apostle saith, "the evil which I would not, that I do;" his meaning is not, that he did that, which at the same time when he did it, he was not willing, either in whole, or in part, to do: hut that he sometimes did that, upon a surprisal by temptation, or through incogitancy, which he was not habitually willing, or disposed in the inner man, to do. But this no ways implies, but that at the time, when he did the evil he speaks of, he did it with the full and entire consent of his will. Or if we shall affirm, that the contrary bent, or motions, of his will at other times, is a sufficient proof, that when he did it, (the evil we speak of,) he did it not with his whole will, or fulness of consent, and so make this doing of evil, or committing of sin, without fulness of consent, in such a sense, a distinguishing character between men regenerate, and unregenerate, we shall bring Herod and Pilate, yea, and probably Judas himself, into the list or roll of men regenerate, with a thousand more, whom the Scriptures know not under any such name or relation; as viz. all those whose judgments and consciences stand against the evil of those ways and practices wherein they walk. Concerning Herod, it is evident, that he did not give commission for the beheading of John the Baptist, with fulness of consent, in the sense mentioned : for when Herodias, to whom he had "promised with an oath to give whatsoever she would ask," had demanded John Baptist's head in a charger, it is said, that "the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them that sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her," Matt. 14:8, 9. Which plainly sheweth, that he had a renitency of will against the evil which he did, immediately before the doing of it: yea, and that he would not have done it, had not the temptations mentioned overcome that inclination. The case is every whit as clear in Pilate; viz. that he gave the sentence of death against Christ, with great reluctancy of mind and will preceding, and so not with fulness of consent, in the sense declared. He would gladly have washed his hands of the business, and desired Caiaphas and the rest of the priests and elders to "take him, and judge him according to their own law:" John 18:31: yea, it is said that, before the sentence was pronounced

against him, he “sought to release him:” John 19:12: which how seriously and effectually he did, all the four evangelists unanimously relate. Thus we see of how dangerous a consequence it is, to make this an essential difference between a true believer, and an ungodly man, that the former never sins with his whole will, or full consent, and that the latter sins with both. But,

2. As to the passage of the apostle mentioned, Rom. 7., I answer further, that when he saith, “The evil which I would not, that I do,” he doth not speak of what he always and in all cases did, much less of what was possible for him to do, but of what he did ordinarily or frequently, or of what was very incident unto him, through the infirmity of the flesh, viz. through inconsiderateness, and anticipation by temptations to do such things, which, whilst he was in a watchful and considering posture, and from under the malign influence of a temptation he was altogether averse unto. Now what a man doth ordinarily is one thing, and what he doth sometimes, and in some particular case, especially what it is possible for him to do, is another. That true believers, whilst such, ordinarily sin not upon worse terms than those mentioned by the apostle concerning his sinning, I easily grant: but it no ways followeth from hence, that therefore they never sin upon other terms, much less, that it is impossible that they should sin upon other. And thus we see, all things thoroughly and impartially argued and debated, to and fro, that even true believers themselves, as well as others, may do those works of the flesh which exclude from the kingdom of God: and that in respect hereof they are subject to this exclusion, as well as other men. Whereas some object against this argument and doctrine, that it maimeth or dismembereth the body of Christ, and brings in an uncouth and unseemly interchange and rechange of members between Christ and the devil, that it maketh regeneration iterable, &c. I answer, that all these, with the like, are but pretended inconveniences, and such only to appearance; the Scripture justifieth them, and judgeth them no inconveniences at all: yea, it holdeth them forth as things necessary and comely in the institutions and dispensations of God.

1. For dismembering the body of Christ: is it not the law of Christ himself, in every particular church or body of his, that as any of their members putrefy, and discover themselves to be rotten and corrupt, they should be cut off by the spiritual sword of excommunication? And doth not

such a dismembering as this rather tend to the honouring and adorning the body of Christ, than any ways to maim or deform it? And for such a dismembering of the body of Christ, which the doctrine in hand supposeth to be causeable by the members themselves, as viz. by the voluntary disfaithing of themselves through sin and wickedness, neither is the permission of this, upon such terms as it is permitted, either unworthy Christ, or inconvenient to the body itself. For, as in a politic or civil corporation, it is better that the governors should permit the members respectively to go or be at liberty, that so they may follow their business and occasions in the world upon the better terms, though by occasion of this liberty they may behave themselves in sundry kinds very unworthily, than it would be to keep them close prisoners, though hereby the said inconveniences might certainly be prevented: in like manner, it is much better for the body of Christ, and for the respective members of it, that he should leave them at liberty, (especially upon such terms as he doth, and which have formerly been declared,) to obey and serve God, and follow the important affairs of their souls freely, and without any physical necessitation, though some do turn this liberty into wantonness, and so into destruction, than it would be to deprive them of this liberty, and to cause and constrain them to any course whatsoever out of necessity, though, it is true, the committing of much sin and iniquity would be prevented hereby in many. The reason of the comparison between the one course and the other, as now it hath been stated and asserted, hath been already laid down and argued in this chapter. The dismembering of the body of Christ's apostles, by the apostasy of Judas, was no disparagement, either to Christ himself or it.

2. For the interchange of members between Christ and Satan, the Scripture presenteth it as a thing possible, yea, as frequent and ordinary. "Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?" 1 Cor. 6:15. In the Original it is, *Ἀρας οὐν τὰ μὴ τον Χριστον ποιήσω*, &c. i. e. "Taking away the members of Christ, shall I make them," &c. meaning, that true believers, who only are the members of Christ, disrelate themselves to him, cease to be members of his, when and whilst they live in a course of whoredom and adultery, and make themselves members of another far different relation, viz. of those harlots, with whom they sinfully converse, and consequently, by such a mediation, of the devil. Calvin himself, commenting upon the next words, "Know ye not," &c. expressly affirmeth, that "He that couples himself with an harlot, hereby becomes one body with her, and therefore pulleth away a

member from the body of Christ.” And both Jerome and Ambrose long before him, carried the apostle’s meaning in the words the same way as they are cited, and owned in their respective interpretations by Musculus upon the place. “*Αρα*, tollens, taking,” saith he, “is so expounded by Jerome, as that it is declared, by the apostle, that those bodies which are made the members of an harlot, are taken away and cut off from, or out of, the body of Christ. He takes,” saith he, “the members of Christ, *i. e.* he cuts himself off from the body of Christ, who is joined unto an harlot. Ambrose avoucheth the same, when he saith, He,” meaning the apostle, “saith thus, Because such members which adhere unto an harlot cease to be the members of Christ, certainly it cannot be that a member of Christ should be a member, also, of an harlot,” &c. And if it be no dishonour unto Christ, to admit and take in such, who have been the foulest and most deformed members of the devil, upon their repentance, for members of his body, which is nothing but what he doth daily, why should it be any disparagement unto him to reject such from being members of this his body, who by their wicked and abominable ways render themselves altogether unworthy the great dignity of such a relation ?

3, and lastly, For the frequent repetition of regeneration, it is of the same consideration with the two former particulars; there is no inconvenience, nothing unworthy God, or of Christ, in it, and for men it is of a most happy and blessed accommodation unto them. When the Scripture speaks of an impossibility of renewing some by repentance, in case they “fall away,” Heb. 6:6, it plainly supposeth that there is such a thing incident unto men, or whereof some men are capable, as renewing again by repentance. And what is regeneration, being interpreted, but a renewing again by repentance ? And if men may die twice, spiritually, (as Jude speaketh of some that were “twice dead,” ver. 12,) why may they not live twice, or twice receive the life of grace opposite hereunto? As it is agreeable to the righteousness and holiness of God, to denounce the sentence of exclusion from his kingdom against men, whoever they be, or have been, when they turn adulterers, fornicators, idolaters, &c., yea, and to execute this sentence accordingly, in case they return not from these sins by repentance before they die, and so to leave them no footing or foundation for heir faith, I mean, to believe, or to expect salvation by Jesus Christ, but only upon their repentance; so is it no less agreeable to



the mercy, patience, and goodness of God, to promise unto backsliding sinners, a re-enjoyment of his favour and love, which is in Christ Jesus, upon condition of their renewing again by repentance, and to exhibit unto them accordingly the full fruits thereof in the salvation of their souls, if they persevere in a course of repentance unto the end. And how sad and deplorable above measure would the condition of many thousands of saints be, in case there were no reiteration of regeneration, I mean, of all such who at any time fall into such ways and practices of sin, which, according to what we have lately heard from the Scriptures, exclude from the kingdom of God! Doubtless there is no more inconvenience for the same person to be twice regenerate, than it was or would have been under the law, for the same man to have taken sanctuary the second time, in case he had the second, time miscarried in slaying a man at unawares. And for regeneration itself, according to the grammatical and proper signification of the word, it imports a reiteration, or repetition, of some generation or other. It cannot import a repetition of the natural generation of men, the sense of Nicodemus, John 3:4, in this point was orthodox, who judged such a thing impossible,) therefore it must import a repetition of a spiritual regeneration; unless we shall say, which I know is the road opinion, that it signifies only the spiritual regeneration, with a kind of reference unto, or reflexion upon, the birth natural. But it is the common sense of divines, that the two generations mentioned, the natural and spiritual, are membra dividenda, and contradistinguished the one unto the other; and so the apostle Peter seems to state and represent them, 1 Pet. 1:23, as also our Saviour himself, John 3:6. Now I suppose there can hardly any instance be given, where the introducing of one contrary form or quality into the subject is termed a reiteration, or repetition of the other. Calefaction, for example, is never termed a repetition of frigefaction, nor is albifaction called a reiteration of nigrifaction; nor when a regenerate or mortified man dieth his natural death is he said to reiterate or repeat his spiritual death. Therefore I rather conceive that regeneration, which the Scripture makes appropriable only unto persons living to years of discretion, who generally in the days of their youth degenerate from the innocency of their childhood and younger years, and corrupt themselves with the principles and ways of the world, relates not unto the natural generation as such, (I mean as natural,) but unto the spiritual estate and condition of

men in respect of their natural generation and birth; in. and upon which they are, if not simply and absolutely, yet comparatively, innocent, harmless, free from pride, malice, &c., and in respect of these qualifications, in grace and favour with God, upon the account of the death and sufferings of Christ for them, as we shall, God willing, prove more at large in the second part of this discourse. In the meantime what we now offer as most probable, touching the reason of the name and relation of regeneration, I conceive our Saviour himself implieth in that passage of his with big disciples : "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be *converted, and become as little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 18:1—3, *Ἐὰν μὴ στραφη*, "Except ye be turned back," as Calvin interpreted!; *i. e.* unless you recover and reinstate yourselves in that estate, or interest in the love and favour of God, which you are in danger of losing by your ambition, by returning to such a humility, innocency, and simplicity, wherein while you were children you were accepted with him, "ye shall not enter," &c. Calvin's words in English are these: "And the conversion whereof he speaks imports, that his disciples had at this time too much accustomed themselves to the common course and manners of men" (in the world) "and therefore that they might aspire to the mark," (at which they aimed; I suppose he meaneth greatness in the kingdom of heaven,) "they must turn back in their course." And unless we shall suppose that children, to whom our Saviour saith that his disciples must be like, or else never "enter into the kingdom of heaven," are in an estate of grace and favour with God, we shall make him to say, in effect, that unless they be like unto those who are in an estate of condemnation they cannot be saved. For, as Musculus upon the place well observes, "Our Saviour doth not say unto them, Except ye be converted, and become as this child; but indefinitely, and become as children," (or little ones,) "lest they should conceive that there was something singular in this child more than in others which they were to imitate." Nor doth any thing that hath been said upon this last account, suppose children to be begotten or born without original sin; only that indeed hath been said, which supposeth that that sin which is in children is taken away by the death of Christ, so that they are generally whilst children in the favour of God through

Christ, notwithstanding that sin which is in them. Neither is this any thing more than what Musculus himself upon the place clearly avoucheth in respect of all children, without exception, “that have been baptized.” But this only by the way.

Nor doth that of the apostle any ways oppose, either the possibility, or conveniency of a second regeneration: “ For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel, 1 Cor. 4:15, because he speaketh here, not of what they were incapable of having afterwards, but of what their state and condition was at present by his means and ministry. That which he remindeth the Corinthians of in the metaphorical notion of his being a father unto them, and the only father they had, is nothing else but that he was the only person that had laid the corner stone, or first foundations of that spiritual building, which was now amongst them; he was the only person that had by the preaching of the gospel, formed them into a church of Christ; and that all those teachers that came amongst them afterwards, however magnified by them above him, yet were they but as tutors and schoolmasters unto them, in comparison of him, building upon his foundations; and consequently, could not in reason be so truly and naturally affected towards them, as he; as it is no ways probable but that the love and care of a father towards his children, should be greater and more genuine, than of a schoolmaster. This is agreeable to what he elsewhere writeth to the same persons: “I have planted, Apollos watered,” &c., 1 Cor. 3:6, and a little after: “According to the grace of God given to me as a skilful master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon,” &c. ver. 10. And elsewhere, “ Not boasting of things without our measure, that is of other men’s labour;” and presently after, “ To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast of another man’s fine of things made ready to our hand,” 2 Cor. 10:15, 16. In these expressions of his, not boasting of things without his measure, of other men’s labours, of things prepared to his hand, &c., he obliquely taxeth the ambitious vanity of those vain-glorious teachers whom these Corinthians so much applauded with an undervaluing of him, in assuming unto themselves the honour and repute of all that knowledge of Christ, and those other worthy things of the gospel that were found in them, as if they had been the authors, and prime or sole instruments of God, in the raising and working of them;

whereas this was his line and measure, and that which of right and according to truth, appertained to him. But his being a father unto them, in this sense, neither implies, but that there might be many particular persons amongst them begotten to the faith through the gospel, by other ministers and teachers besides him; nor but that, in case any of those who had been begotten by him, should apostatise from the faith, they might be again recovered, and so be again begotten by others. The substance of this interpretation is delivered by Calvin himself upon the place. "If any objecteth," saith he, "how can Paul deny those to be fathers who succeeded him, when as there are new children begotten unto God, daily in the church? The answer is easy, viz. that here he speaketh of the first beginnings of a church. For though never so many should have been begotten by the ministry of other men, yet this honour remained entire unto Paul, that he was the (first) founder of the Corinthian church." So that evident it is that there is nothing at all in the place alleged against a reiteration of regeneration.

Nor is that, which I have sometimes heard alleged in opposition to the doctrine maintained in the digression yet in hand, any whit more considerable; as viz. that it teacheth, or supposeth a blotting and a blurring, a putting in, and a putting out of names in God's book of life, which some, it seems, conceive to be unseemly, and some ways disparaging the said book. But,

1. The Scripture itself frequently speaks of that, which the objectors call a blotting in the said book of God, and that without the least intimation of any disparagement hereby unto it. When Moses prayed God "to blot him out of the book which he had written," in case he would not forgive the sin of the people, Exod. 32:32, questionless he did not conceive that he desired any thing that would deface or disgrace his book. So when God returned this answer to that his demand, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book," he did not intend any blemish to his book. When Christ from heaven expresseth himself thus to the church of Sardis, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life," &c., Rev. 3:5, he clearly supposeth, that there were, or at least, might be, some whose names he would blot out of this book: otherwise it would be no matter of honour, or specialty of privilege, which he promiseth herein. As in case all men were to be clothed in white, and no possibility of any man's falling

short of this honour, it had been very impertinent and improper for our Saviour to promise with so much solemnity as the words import, a clothing in white, by way of reward, unto him that overcometh. See also Psa. 69:28.

2. To conceive that what the Scripture meaneth by blotting out of the book of life, should be any matter of defacement to this book, or any thing unseemly for God otherwise, savours of carnality of notion about this book: and of a misapprehension of what is seemly and unseemly for God to do. For God's book of life is nothing else, but his general purpose or decree concerning persons to be saved, not by their names, but their capacities or qualifications. So that when he is said to blot out any man's name out of this book, which he never doth, or is said to do, but upon their divesting themselves of that capacity, in respect whereof they are said to have been written in this book, according to what we lately heard from himself, "whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book," it importeth only this, that whereas before whilst he remained faithful and upright with God, God, according to his purpose and promise made to such men, intended life and salvation unto him, now, by reason of his backsliding unto sin and wickedness, he purposeth to destroy him, and that according to his general and impartial decree of destroying sinners and kicked men, if they repent not. So that if it be not unseemly for God to destroy backsliding sinners, who remain hardened and impenitent to the end, neither is it unseemly for him to blot out the names of men, upon the occasion specified, out of his book of life. Cameron expounding those words lately mentioned, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life," "To he blotted out of the book of life," saith he, "is nothing else but to be condemned. It is a form of speech where the antecedent is put for the consequent, borrowed from that which is frequently done amongst men, as viz. when any man (or any man's name) is, by command from the magistrate, struck out of the catalogue or roll of citizens, that all may know that he is a condemned man." There is nothing in the allegation in hand worthy any further consideration: it is all face, and nothing heart against the cause which it pretends to fight.

Another argument, demonstrative of the doctrine pre-asserted, is this: "That doctrine which is according unto godliness, i. e. whose natural and proper tendency is to promote godliness in the hearts and lives of men, is

evangelical, and of unquestionable comportance with the truth: Such is the doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints' declining, both totally and finally: Ergo.

The reason of the major proposition, though the truth of it needs no light hut its own to be seen by, is, because the gospel itself is a "doctrine which is according unto godliness," 1 Tim. 6:3; a "truth according unto godliness," Tit. 1:1; , a "mystery of godliness," &c., 1Tim. 3:16; i. e. a doctrine, truth, and mystery calculated, contrived, and framed by God with a singular aptness, and choiceness of ingredients, for the advancement of godliness in the world. Therefore what particular doctrine soever is of the same spirit, tendency, and. import, must needs be a natural branch thereof, and of perfect accord with it. This proposition then is unquestionable.

Nor can the minor lightly be less unquestionable to him, that shall duly and impartially examine and weigh the frame and import of it. For what doctrine can be more proper or powerful to promote godliness in the hearts and lives of men than that, which on the one hand promiseth a crown of blessedness, and eternal glory, to those that live godly, without declining; and on the other hand, threateneth the vengeance of eternal fire against those that shall turn aside unto profaneness, and not return by repentance? Whereas that doctrine which promiseth, and that with all possible certainty and assurance, all fulness of blessedness and glory to those that shall at any time be godly, though they shall the very next day or hour degenerate, and turn loose and profane, and continue never so long in such a course, is most manifestly destructive unto godliness, and encouraging above measure to profaneness.

If it be objected and said; Yea, hut the assurance of the unchangeableness of God's love towards him that is godly, is both a more effectual and persuading motive unto godliness, and more encouraging unto a persevering in godliness, than a doubtfulness or uncertainty, whether God will be constant in his affection to such.

a man or no. Certainty of reward is more encouraging unto action than uncertainty. I answer,

1. The doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints' final defection, teacheth an assurance of the unchangeableness of God's love towards him that is godly, as well as the doctrine contrary to it; only with this difference, this latter doctrine teacheth the said unchangeableness

absolutely, and against all possible change by sin and wickedness, in the person supposed, at present, to be godly; whereas the former teacheth and asserteth the same unchangeableness, but conditionally, and upon the perseverance of him that is godly in his course. So that this doctrine teacheth as much certainty of the love of God towards him that is godly as such, and as continuing such, as the other doth. And the truth is, that the other doctrine, rightly interpreted, doth not so much promise absolutely the certainty of God's love to him that is godly, as it promiseth conditionally the certainty of this love to him that is profane, viz. in case, and upon condition that he had been once godly.

2. Neither is certainty of reward, in every sense or kind, more encouraging unto action than uncertainty, in some kind. To promise with all possible assurance the same reward or prize to him that shall not run in the race, which is promised upon these terms to him that shall run, is not more encouraging unto men thus to run than to promise it conditionally, viz. upon their running; which is a promising of it with uncertainty, in this respect, viz. because it is uncertain whether men will run in the said race or no; and consequently whether they shall receive the said prize or no upon such a promise. Certainty of reward is then, and in such cases, more encouraging unto action than uncertainty, when the certainty of obtaining or receiving it is suspended upon the action, not when it is assured unto men, whether they act or no.

3, and lastly, Though an assurance of the unchangeableness of the love of God towards him that is godly, upon any and against any terms whatsoever, suppose such an assurance could be effectually and upon good grounds given unto men, be, or would be, a more effectual and prevailing motive unto godliness, i. e. to an entrance into godliness, than an uncertainty whether this love of God would be continued to such a man unto the end or no ; yet would it not be any thing comparably so effectual or prevailing upon men that are godly, to persevere in godliness, as such an uncertainty which hath been asserted. Nay, the truth is, that such an assurance effectually given to him that is godly, without any condition of his remaining godly, is no encouragement at all unto him to persevere in godliness, but rather to turn aside unto profaneness. The reason is plain: no reward which is promised unto men simply and absolutely is encouraging to any action or engagement whatsoever. It is true a simple and absolute promise of a reward may be, and commonly is

obliging unto action by way of duty or thankfulness unto him who maketh the promise; but is never so obliging unto action simply as such a promise which assureth the reward only upon the performance of the action. Hence it is that the apostle, encouraging and persuading men unto holiness, holds forth not absolute, but conditional promises unto them in order hereunto. The tenor of the promises we mean, is this: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,” 2 Cor. 6:17, 18; meaning, that upon condition you will come out, &c., and touch no unclean thing, I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, &c. Upon the account of these promises, he immediately subjoins: “Having therefore *these* promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” 2 Cor. 7:1. Such promises as these, viz. which hold forth such great and blessed rewards, and withal require and enjoin holiness, by way of condition, for the receiving and enjoyment of them, are of the most sovereign efficacy and import that can be imagined to persuade you unto holiness. Nor can any instance, I believe, be given from the Scriptures, where the Holy Ghost presseth or persuadeth unto action or ways of righteousness, by any other kind of promise than that which is either in form or in matter (*i. e.* in sense and meaning) conditional.

Besides, whether any such assurance of the unchangeableness of the love of God towards him that is godly, as the objection speaks of, can be effectually and upon sufficient grounds given unto men, is very questionable: yea, I conceive there is more reason to judge otherwise than so. Yea, that which is yet more, I verily believe, that in case any such assurance of the unchangeableness of God’s love were to be found in, or could regularly be deduced from the Scriptures, it were a just ground to any intelligent and considering man to question their authority, and whether they were from God or no. For that a God, infinitely righteous and holy, should irreversibly assure the immortal and undefiled inheritance of his grace and favour, unto any creature whatsoever, so that though this creature should prove never so abominable in his sight, never so outrageously and desperately wicked and profane, he should not be at liberty to withhold this inheritance from him, is a saying, doubtless, too hard for any man, who rightly understands and considers the nature of



God, to hear. For what can it be conceived that he should promise more to such a person, who should remain loyal in his affections, and constant in his obedience unto him without turning aside either to the right hand or to the left all his days? And where now would be the God of judgment? “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words,” (saith Malachi, in God’s name, unto the people;) “yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him ? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?” Mal. 2:17. Clearly implying, 1. That to say that God delighteth in them that do evil, is highly displeasing and dishonourable to him, amounting to no less, being interpreted, than a denial of his being a God of judgment, *i. e.* of his wisdom and righteousness, or that he puts any difference in his affections between the best and worst of men. 2. That, notwithstanding the great offensiveness unto God of such a saying, yet they that utter it are backward to consider any such unworthiness in it.

It is possible that yet some will further object, against the argument in hand, Unless the saints be assured of the perpetuity of their standing in the grace and favour of God, they must needs be under fears of falling away, and so of perishing: and fear, we know, is of a discouraging and enfeebling nature, an enemy unto such actions, which men of confidence and courage are apt and ready to undertake. I answer,

1. That the strength of this objection hath been already trodden down, and that more than once. See pp. 418, &c. of this chapter: and more upon the same account, Chap. 9, I here add,

2. That the saints, notwithstanding the possibility of their final falling away, have, or may have, such an assurance of the perpetuity of their standing in the grace and favour of God, which may exclude all fear, at least that is of a discouraging or enfeebling nature. The apostle, as we have formerly shown, lived, at a very excellent rate, both of courage and confidence, notwithstanding he knew that it was possible for him to become a reprobate. The assurance he had that, upon a diligent use of those means which he knew assuredly God would vouchsafe unto him, he should prevent his being a reprobate, was a golden foundation unto him of that confidence and courage, wherein he equalized the holy angels themselves. Suppose a man hath a deep well or pit of water in his yard or grounds, near adjoining to his house, he is no more afraid of being drowned either in the one or in the other, than he that lives a thousand

miles' distance from them. The reason is, because he knows he need not be in any danger of such a miscarriage by them, unless he please. The evil which a man knows, he may prevent if he will, and that which simply is not, or not possible to be, is of the same consideration to a sober and intelligent man; especially if he knows that he may prevent it if he will, without any damage or inconvenience to him. And for courage and confidence, the truth is, that there is no place for them, but under a possibility at least of danger, and miscarrying by an enemy.

3, and lastly, An assurance of a perpetual enjoyment of, or abiding in the love and favour of God, otherwise than upon condition of love and loyalty in the creature towards him, is neither honourable for God to make or grant, nor meet for a creature to expect or desire. Who can judge it much short of blasphemy, to put such a saying as this into the mouth of the most holy God, unto any of his creatures: "Though thou addest drunkenness to thirst, and pollutest thyself with all the abominations of wicked and ungodly men; though thou committest whoredom, adultery, incest, murder, theft; though thou hatest to be reformed, and easiest all my commandments behind thy back, &c. yet shalt thou be precious in mine eyes, and mine heart shall be towards thee in the greatest love and dearest affection for ever; and thou shalt inherit my everlasting kingdom, thy desperate rebellions against me notwithstanding." I know my opposers are not wont to deliver themselves, or express their doctrine in such terms as these, nor will they, haply, well bear such a representation of it as this: but I appeal to their consciences, and to the impartial reasons of all unprejudiced men, whether their doctrine of perseverance doth not, without any wresting, straining, or perverting in the least, directly lead to such a horrid thought or conceit of God, as that presented in the said saying. Certain I am, that the Lord Christ himself resolves his abiding in his Father's love into his keeping of his commandments; and informs his disciples withal that he loves them upon the same terms. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love," John 15: 9, 10. By the way, had there been an unavoidable necessity lying upon the disciples to continue in Christ's love, there had been no necessity of his exhortation unto them in order thereunto. Who persuades a man to do that which is not in his power to neglect, or not to do? In like manner, had there been a like unavoidable necessity upon the disciples to keep Christ's commandments, doubtless he

would not have prescribed it unto them in the nature of a conditional means for their abiding in his love. No man in his right mind makes conditions of things or actions that are unavoidable, or which cannot but be performed by them of whom they are required.

To pretend that, the weakness of the flesh even in the best of the saints considered, and their aptness to go astray, they must needs lie under many troublesome and tormenting fears of perishing, unless they have some promise or assurance from God to support them, that, notwithstanding any declinings or goings astray incident unto them, yet they shall not lose his favour or perish, is to pretend nothing but what hath been thoroughly answered already, especially in the ninth chapter. I only add here,

1. That the weakness of the flesh, or the aptness of miscarrying through this, is no reasonable ground of fear unto any true believer of his perishing, considering that no man loseth or forfeiteth the grace and favour of God through sins of weakness or infirmity. It is only the strength of sin and corruption in men that exposeth them to the danger of losing the love of God.

2. If the saints be willing to strengthen the Spirit in them, and make him willing, proportionably to the means vouchsafed unto them by God for such a purpose, this will fully balance the weakness of the flesh, and prevent the miscarriage and breakings out hereof. "This I say then," saith the apostle, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." And again: "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law," Gal. 5:16, 18, and consequently are in no danger of losing the favour of God, or of perishing for such sins which, under the conduct of the Spirit, you are subject unto.

- 3, and lastly, There is no such aptness or proneness unto sin (sins I mean of a disinheriting import) in saints, or true believers, as is pretended, but, on the contrary, a strong propension or inclination unto righteousness reigneth in them. We heard formerly from the apostle John, that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he *cannot* sin, because he is bom of God," 1 John 3:9. Which passage of Scripture the reader may find unfolded at large, Chap, 10., page 274. The same apostle, to the same purpose, had said a little before, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," and, consequently, no saint or true believer. And again, a little after, he saith, " In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God," &c. Afterwards thus: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments (*i. e.* the

keeping of his commandments) are not grievous,” 1 John 5:3, viz. to him that loveth God, *i. e.* to a saint or true believer: It followeth, “ For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? ” From these passages, with many others of like import which might have been added from the same apostle, it is fully evident that there is a pregnant, strong, triumphing propension in all true believers to walk holily, and to live righteously; so that to refrain sinning (sinning I mean as before, customarily, and against conscience, which kind of sin only is exclusive from the love and kingdom of God) is no such great mastery, no such matter of difficulty, unto such men; and that when they are overcome, and fall into such sins, it is through a mere voluntary neglect of stirring up the grace of God that is in them, and of maintaining that holy principle we speak of in strength and vigour, by such means as God most graciously and indulgently vouchsafeth unto them in abundance for such a purpose. And thus we see, all things impartially weighed and debated to and fro, that the doctrine which supposeth a possibility of the saints’ final declining, is the doctrine which is “according to godliness,” and the corival of it an enemy thereunto.

That doctrine, whose genuine and proper tendency is to advance the peace and joy of the saints in believing, is of a natural sympathy with the gospel, and, upon this account, a truth: Such is the doctrine which informeth the saints of a possibility of their total and final falling away: Ergo. Our adversaries themselves in the cause depending, will not, I presume, regret the granting of the former proposition, the truth of it being a truth so near at hand. The minor hath received confirmation in abundance from what was argued and evinced in the ninth chapter; where we demonstratively proved that the doctrine we now assert is of the most healthful and sound constitution to make a nurse for the peace, and joy, and comforts of the saints, whereas that which is opposite to it is but of a melancholic and sad complexion in comparison. The ground we built our demonstration upon was this: That doctrine which is of the most encouraging, quickening, and strengthening import to the Spirit and grace of God in men, on the one hand, and most crucifying and destructive to the flesh, on the other hand, must needs be a doctrine of the best and choicest accommodation for the peace and comfort of

believers. The reason hereof is, because the peace, joy, and comfort of believers, do, if not wholly, yet in a very great measure, depend upon the “fruits of the Spirit,” and the testimony of their consciences concerning their loyalty and faithfulness unto God, in doing his will, keeping his commandments, refraining “all false ways,” as David speaketh, abstaining from the works of the flesh, &c. As, on the contrary, that root of bitterness in the saints, from which fears and doubtings, perplexities, agonies, and consternations of soul spring, is the flesh, when, for want of a sharp bridle still kept in the jaws or lips of it, it breaks out, becomes unruly, and magnifies itself against God and his laws. These things we prosecuted more at large in the forenamed chapter; where likewise we proved, above all reasonable contradiction, that the sense of those who assert a possibility of the saints’ “drawing back” even to perdition, is a doctrine of a very rich sympathy with the spirit, or regenerate part in men, of an excellent and high animation unto it, and on the contrary, a doctrine mortally inspired against the flesh, with all the lusts and ways hereof. Here also we gave an answer in full unto those who are wont to object and pretend, that the best and holiest persons more generally cleave in their judgments to the doctrine of absolute perseverance, as, on the other hand, that persons more carnally and loosely disposed more generally take up that which is contrary unto it. So that we shall not need to add in this place any thing further to give weight or strength to the argument in hand, unless it be to certify the reader, that since the publishing and clearing the doctrine now asserted, some very godly and seriously religious persons have with their whole hearts blessed God for it. We proceed to another argument.

That doctrine which evacuates, and turns into weakness and folly all that gracious counsel of the Holy Ghost, which consists, partly, in that diligent information which he gives unto the saints, from place to place, concerning the hostile, cruel, and bloody mind and intentions of Satan against them; partly, in detecting and making known all his subtle stratagems, his plots, methods, and dangerous machinations against them; partly, also, in furnishing them with spiritual weapons of all sorts, whereby they may be able to grapple with him notwithstanding, and gloriously to triumph over him; partly again, in those frequent admonitions, exhortations, encouragements to quit themselves like men in resisting him, and making good their ground against him, which are

found in the Scriptures; and lastly, in professing his fear lest Satan should circumvent and deceive them; that doctrine, I say, which reflects disparagement and vanity upon all these most serious and gracious applications of the Holy Ghost unto the saints, must needs be a doctrine of vanity and error; and, consequently, that which opposeth it, by like necessity, a truth: But such is the common doctrine of absolute and infallible perseverance: Ergo.

The major in this argument is greater than exception. For doubtless no doctrine which is of an undervaluing import either to the grace or wisdom of the Holy Ghost in any Scripture transaction, can be evangelical or consistent with truth. The minor likewise is evident upon this account. All those actions or transactions ascribed to the Holy Ghost in the major proposition, as, viz. his discovering and detecting unto the saints the hostile spirit and machinations of Satan against them, his furnishing them with spiritual weapons to conflict with him, and fight against him, &c., are in several places of Scripture plainly reported and attributed unto him, particularly in these: Jam. 4:7 ; 1 Pet. 5:8, 9; Eph. 6:11,12, &c.; 2 Cor. 11:3,14; and 2:11; Matt. 12:43, 44, &c.; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; 1 Cor. 7:5, not to mention many others. Now if the saints be in no possibility of being finally overcome by Satan, or of miscarrying in the great and most important business of their salvation, by his snares and subtleties, all that operousness and diligence of the Holy Ghost in those late-mentioned addressments of his unto them, in order to their final conquest over Satan, will be found of very light consequence, of little concernment to them. Yea, if the said addressments of the Holy Ghost be compared with the state and condition of the saints, as the said doctrine of perseverance representeth and affirmeth it to be, and be digested or formed into an hypotyposis accordingly, the utter uselessness and impertinency of them will yet much more evidently appear. Suppose we then the Holy Ghost should speak thus unto the saints: "O you that truly believe, who by virtue of the promise of that God that cannot lie, are fully persuaded and possessed that you shall be kept by God by his irresistible grace in true faith until death, so that though Satan shall set all his wits on work, and by all his stratagems, snares, and cunning devices seek to destroy you; yea, though he should entice you away from God by the allurements of the world, and entangle you with them again, yea, and should cause you to run and rush headlong against the light of your own judgments and

consciences, into all manner of horrid sins and abominations, yet shall all his attempts and assaults upon you in every kind be in vain ; you shall be in never the more danger or possibility of perishing : unto you I say, attend and consider how sore and dangerous a combat you are like to sustain; for you are to wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, the governors of this world, and spiritual wickednesses ; against that old serpent, the devil, that great red dragon, who was a murderer from the beginning, and who still goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, who will set himself with all his might to thrust you headlong into all manner of sins, and so to separate between God and you for ever : and truly I am afraid lest, as the serpent by his subtlety deceived Eve, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, lest the tempter should any ways tempt you, and my labour about you be in vain. Therefore watch, pray, and resist him stedfast in the faith; take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to resist in an evil day, and having done all things, stand fast; stand, having your loins girt with the girdle of truth, and the breast-plate of righteousness upon you,” &c. Would such an oration or speech as this be any ways worthy the infinite wisdom of the Holy Ghost? Or is it not the part of a very weak and simple person to admonish a man, and that in a most serious and solemn manner, of a danger threatening him or hanging over his head, and withal to instruct and teach him with a great variety of rules, precepts, and cautions, how to escape this danger, when as both himself knows, and the person admonished likewise knoweth, and this with the knowledge also of the admonisher, that it is a thing altogether impossible that ever the danger should befall him, or the evil, against which he is so solemnly cautioned, come upon him ? Therefore they who make the Holy Ghost to have part and fellowship in such weakness as this are most insufferably injurious unto him.

And whereas they still plead, or pretend rather, that such admonitions as those lately specified may well stand with an unconditioned promise of perseverance, we have formerly shown (see from page 403, to page 419) that they are not able to make good this plea, nor to give any reasonable account of it. Whereas they add that their sense or opinion is not that it is a thing absolutely or every ways impossible for true believers to fall away totally or finally from their faith ; but that they willingly grant, that even

true believers, what through their own weakness, and what through the subtle baits and temptations of Satan, may so fall away, &c.; I answer, that this is but a fig-leaf sought out to cover the nakedness of their opinion, which hath no strength at all nor wear in it. For what though it were in a thousand other respects never so possible for true believers to perish; yet if it be altogether impossible in such a respect, which overrules all those other, and which will, and of necessity must, hinder the coming of it to pass, all those other notwithstanding, it is to be judged simply and absolutely impossible; and all those respects wherein it is pretended possible, are not to be brought into account in such a case. The rule in the civil law and in reason is, *omnia invalids nihilo sunt aequiparanda*, *i.e.* all things, which (together) are invalid, are to be judged as none at all. Yea, the Scripture itself, when it speaks of any thing which God hath promised, or engaged himself to bring to pass, though there be never so many second causes, and these never so potent in their kind to oppose it, nullifies the validity of all these, and asserts the certain futurity of the effect upon such terms as if in no respect whatsoever it were impossible, or obnoxious to a non-being or non-coming to pass. “If God be *for us*,” saith Paul, “who can be against us?” Rom. 8:31 ; clearly implying, that no enmity, no opposition, or interposition of things or persons whatsoever against our comfort and peace, are of any consideration at all, when we have the power of God engaged for our security. And is there not altogether the same reason of the perseverance of the saints, in case God hath made an absolute promise hereof unto them? Or is it reasonable, or any ways considerable, to say, that in this respect, or in that respect, or in a third respect, they may possibly not persevere, in case it be supposed that God hath absolutely, peremptorily, and irreversibly, against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, decreed their perseverance ?

Whereas some pretend that Christ himself was tempted, who yet was in no danger of sinning or of perishing, the answer is, that this indeed is a truth, but palpably irrelative to the cause in hand. It would have paralleled, in case the Holy Ghost should have applied himself unto Christ in such admonitions, detections of Satan’s malice and methods against him, exhortations to be watchful, to pray, to stand fast, and resist him, with professing himself afraid lest Satan should circumvent him, &c., as those, wherein we heard he addresseth himself unto believers; but there being no such applications as these made unto him by the Holy



Ghost, the case is altogether different. It is true, Christ, as man, was subject to the whole law of God, and to every branch and particular precept thereof, so far as it concerned him, *i. e.* so far as it concerned men considered simply as men, or as righteous and good men; but as it relates unto men considered as subject to moral weaknesses and infirmities, or as in a capacity of being overgrown and overcome with sinful corruptions, and so liable unto perishing, he was not in subjection unto it. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied but that even Christ himself, considered simply as man, had upon him the image and superscription of a creature or finite being, I mean, mutability; yet so that all potentiality in him in this kind was abundantly balanced, overbalanced, by the hypostatical union and the unmeasureableness of that grace which flowed from this spring upon and into his humanity; by means whereof there is an impossibility, though neither merely logical or natural, nor yet merely moral, but compounded, and, as it were, mixed of both, such as hath no place in the condition of any mere creature whatsoever, that he should be actually changed to the days of eternity. So that in respect of the personal union with the Godhead, even Christ-man is to be looked upon as simply and absolutely unchangeable, a prerogative royal, wherein neither saints nor angels have part with him. And because of such an unchangeableness in him, though otherwise he was a subject capable enough of being tempted, yet was he not a person meet to be entreated, or dealt with by the Holy Ghost, upon those terms of admonitions, cautions, exhortations unto watchfulness, constancy, or standing fast, informations of danger threatening him in case he should not quit himself worthily, &c., wherein he frequently turneth himself unto the saints and true believers, as we heard.

Nor is that necessity of doing righteousness and obeying God, which rested upon the will of Christ by the means aforesaid, any whit prejudicial to the merit or rewardableness of what he did and suffered in the flesh, though it be most true that any such necessity which should cause the wills of men, other men, necessitatingly or unavoidably to act righteously, would be destructive to the rewardableness of what they should act upon such terms. The reason of the difference is, because, in case any such necessity of well-doing should come upon or be found in the wills of mere men, they must necessarily be passive herein, inasmuch as they have no native or inward principle of their own whereby to contract or induce any

such necessity upon themselves; and what men are necessitated to do in a passive way, wants the ratio formalis, the essential property, of what is rewardable either by the rules of wisdom or justice. See more upon this account, page 423. But that necessity which rested in or upon the will of Christ of doing righteously, though it was not a mere logical or irresistible necessity neither, as was lately intimated, but such as it was, it was contracted by himself, and that voluntarily and freely, the Godhead or the Divine nature personally united with the human, which was as much, as properly, as essentially Christ as the human nature itself in this union, voluntarily and freely deriving unto the human, so united unto it, such a fulness of grace, holiness, and goodness, from which that necessity we speak of of well-doing, in a way of a genuine and kindly result, arose upon him, and abides with him for ever. No mere creature having the like opportunity or means of vesting the like necessity of well-doing in itself, it followeth upon a very fair account, that in case it were, or could be, supposed that they (mere creatures, I mean) were unavoidably necessitated to do well, such doings of theirs should be incapable of reward, although it be otherwise in the case of Jesus Christ and of that unparalleled necessity of well-doing which was found in him. I shall only add one argument more, and therewith conclude this chapter.

That doctrine which naturally and directly tendeth to beget and foment jealousies and evil surmises between brethren in Christ, or such as ought cordially to love, reverence, and honour one another, is not confederate with the gospel, nor from God; and consequently, that which contradicteth it must needs be a truth: The common doctrine of unquestionable and unconditioned perseverance is a doctrine of this tendency, apt to beget and foment jealousies, suspicions, and evil surmises between brethren, or such as ought to love and respect one the other as brethren in Christ, &c. Ergo. The major in this argument will, I suppose, meet with no adversary; and therefore needs no second. The minor standeth firm and strong upon this foundation. That doctrine which teacheth and persuadeth me to judge the faith and love of those whom I ought cordially to love and honour as saints and brethren in Christ, to be no better than the faith and love of hypocrites, dissemblers, formal professors, &c., directly tendeth to beget jealousies and evil surmises in me against them, and is of the same tendency to occasion them to measure back again the same measure towards me: The common

doctrine of peremptory perseverance thus teacheth and persuadeth both me and them: Ergo. The major here also fears no contradiction, and so craves no assistance. The reason of the minor is, because I cannot reasonably judge either the faith or love of those whom I stand most bound by the law of Christ to love, reverence, and honour as saints and brethren, to be better, greater, or more sincere than sometimes I judged, or at least ought to have judged, the faith and love of those to have been whom the doctrine we speak of teacheth me to judge to have been hypocrites and false-hearted, even then when their faith and love were at the best. For the very truth is, that among all the professors of Christian religion that are at present any ways known unto me, (and I make no question but that every other Christian of any considerable standing in the world, may with a good conscience profess the like of himself,) there is not any one whom I can reasonably judge to be either more sound in faith or sincere in love, both towards God and men, than I sometimes judged, and that upon competent grounds, yea, the best that either I then was, or yet am capable of, some others to have been, whom now I know to be wretched apostates, and to have given up themselves to work all filthiness, and that with greediness. Therefore, if upon or because of their apostasy, I stand bound to judge them to have been in the best of their spiritual standings no better than hypocrites, it is impossible but that I should be jealous and suspicious at least lest the best and greatest professors of Christ that are known to me in all the world should be no better than hypocrites also, notwithstanding any account or satisfaction they give, or possibly can give unto me, of their sincerity. If it be replied, that even that doctrine which I teach, in opposition to that other, hath a like tendency to create and nourish amongst the saints reciprocally, if not the same jealousies and evil surmises, which have been charged upon the other, yet others every whit as bad, or however, not much better then they ; inasmuch as this doctrine itself, teacheth saints to look one upon another, as those that may apostatise, and turn enemies unto Christ and the gospel: and is not such a jealousy as this concerning any person, every whit as unchristian, hard, or uncharitable, as to look upon him as a possible hypocrite ? To this I answer;

That a jealousy or suspicion of a present vileness, or unworthiness in a man, especially when he that is suspicious, hath all the best grounds that can be given why he should not be suspicious in this kind, is a far worse

and more unchristian jealousy and suspicion, than that which is conceived against a man touching any future unworthiness, that only possibly may be found in him. The doctrine which teacheth a possibility only of a total and final defection in the saints, doth not invite, or occasion any man, to judge concerning any saint or true believer, that he will, or that he is likely so to fall, but only that it is possible for him so to fall. Nor is such a judgment, or thought as this, concerning any man, yea, or creature whatsoever, any jealousy or suspicion at all concerning him, nor hath it any thing reflective, or disparaging in it, to the worth, honour, or repute of that creature, how great and worthy soever he be, concerning whom it is conceived; it being no disparagement at all, no, not to the first born of creatures, I mean to the angels themselves, not to partake, or not to be thought to partake, in any incommunicable property of God, such as his unchangeableness is. To look upon a saint, or a true believer, as one who may possibly apostatise, is but to look upon him as being a creature, and not God: nor would such an eye as this offend the greatest angel in heaven, considering that he never gave, nor is capable of giving, any competent ground or reason unto any man to look upon him with any other. But to look upon a saint, or true believer, especially when he hath given all the Christian satisfaction that reasonably can be desired, or expected, of his uprightness and sincerity, as one, that for aught we can tell, or have any sufficient ground to judge the contrary, may be a hypocrite, and rotten at the core, is a high strain of unchristian unworthiness, and what reason itself, competently informed, cannot lightly but abhor.

The premises concerning the subject yet in hand, the doctrine of perseverance, duly considered, it fully appears, that that doctrine, which for these many years last past hath magnified itself in the tongues and pens of men, not only or simply for a truth, but with many great eulogiums, and titles of sovereign dignity, as that it is a fundamental article of the reformed religion, one of the principal points or heads of Christian religion, wherein the reformed churches have purged themselves from the errors of popery; that it is the foundation of all true assurance of salvation, without which true faith itself cannot stand; that it contains that promise of God, which all ministers of the gospel stand bound to commend, and inculcate with all diligence into all true believers for their comfort; with many such like studied and strained-for

commendations ; this doctrine, I say, in whose praises the friends of it have risen up so early, and lifted it up so near unto the heavens, as hath been shown, upon a strict and impartial inquiry and examination, hath been found a mere impostor, an appearance of Satan in the likeness of an angel of light, a tenet which cannot stand in judgment with the sound and wholesome doctrines of the gospel. We shall further, God willing, show unto you, in how little request the said doctrine of perseverance was with those, who are to this day counted pillars of the Christian faith in the primitive and most exemplary times; and likewise how unstable and uncertain, if not unsatisfied also, the greatest friends, and learnedest abettors of it in latter times, or at least those, who are commonly taken for such, have been in their judgments about it. In the interim we shall only, in order to the further clearing up of the truth against the mist of the said doctrine, give you a brief account from the Scriptures themselves of some examples, who with their own dedinings sealed the truth of that doctrine, which hath been maintained hitherto, concerning the possibility of a total declining in the saints.

## CHAPTER 14.

**Exhibiting from the Scriptures some instances of a total declining, or falling away, from the grace and favour of God, in true believers.**

THE contents and undertaking of this chapter, is a surplusage, or overmeasure to the demonstration of the doctrine under defence. For to prove a possibility that true believers may totally fall away, it is not necessary to prove, either that any such will so fall away: this would be a very presumptuous engagement: nor that any such are wont to fall away, though this be extremely probable, and a borderer to that which is evident and unquestionable : nor yet that any have actually and de facto so fallen away, which is our present engagement: but only to evince the truth of such grounds and reasons, whether from the Scriptures, or from the nature and consideration of the things themselves, from which, being granted, the said possibility perfectly appeareth, and becomes visible to the eyes of the judgments and understandings of men. Nevertheless, since the eviction of this assertion, that some, formerly saints and true believers, have de facto totally fallen away, is so pregnant a proof of the possibility that such may so fall away, I judged it both worth my labour, and the reader's consideration, to present what the Scriptures hold forth upon that account.

Let us first insist upon the example of David; concerning whom no man, I presume, questioneth, but that he was as true and real a saint and believer, before the perpetration of those two horrid sins, one upon the neck of another, murder and adultery, as he was after his repentance of, or for, those perpetrations. For, 1. that signal testimony of being “ a man according to God's own heart,” was given unto him by God himself, before he committed these sins, as appears from Acts 13:22, compared with Psal. 89:20; 1 Kings 14:8. In the first of these places it is said: “ And after he had taken him away, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he witnessed, saying, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which will do all things that I will.” This, with the other places mentioned, clearly speak of the frame and temper of David's heart, and of the acceptableness of his person unto God, at the time of his anointing, and investiture into the kingdom: whereas it is evident that the

two great sins specified were committed by him many years after he had been king. Besides, there are many pregnant arguments in the Scripture, of David's integrity and uprightness before God, before that great eclipse of the glory of them, whereof we speak. But we shall not need to insist upon any thing in this kind: our adversaries themselves, in the cause depending, generally acknowledge him to have been a man truly godly and regenerate, before the guilt of the two enormous sins mentioned clave unto him. The question is, whether he continued such, truly godly, under the guilt of the said sins, viz., from the time of the perpetration of them, until the time of his repentance: They affirm, I deny; and give this account of my denial in opposition to their affirmation.

He that commits murder and adultery, not only against the clear light of his conscience, but with deliberation and premeditated contrivance, and remains under the pollution and guilt of these sins without repentance, is not a man truly godly, or accepted with God: But this was David's case; he committed murder and adultery, not only against the light of his conscience, but, &c. Ergo. The minor proposition is in all points evident from the tenor of the story laid down in chap. 11. and 12. of the second of Samuel, where the Holy Ghost very particularly and at large reporteth the manner and method of David's actings and behaviour, in order to the committing of the said sins. But this proposition, I conceive, hath so much light of truth shining upon it from the Scriptures, that they who deny the Conclusion will not deny it. For the major; this hath been sufficiently argued and proved in the former chapter, in our traverse of the fifth argument, there propounded to prove a possibility of a total defection in the saints, pages 425, 426, &c., where likewise all the pleas of exception, commonly made against it, were largely debated and answered to the full. I shall here only add this brief argument for the further confirmation of it. "Whosoever is truly godly, hath by grace and promise from God, a right and title to the kingdom of God. This proposition is current doctrine amongst our adversaries. Therefore I assume: But whosoever commits murder and adultery, and this against the light of conscience, with deliberation and premeditated contrivance, and remains impenitent under the guilt of such commissions, during such his impenitency, hath no right or title to the kingdom of God : Ergo. This is proved ex abundanti, from Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10. (places formerly argued.) Touching the former, the apostle, after a large enumeration of

the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, envyings, murders, &c. subjoins, “of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, *that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” The other place is of the same import. So likewise are the passages, Ephes. 5:5, 6. It seems this was a doctrine frequently inculcated by the apostle into the minds and consciences of such as were saints, (at least so judged and reputed by him,) and therefore such as we ought to judge to have been none other. Now if those who formerly had been saints, and in this capacity heirs of the kingdom of God, should have retained the same capacity, under the doing of the things mentioned, and before any remorse of soul or repentance for them, the apostle could not, either with reason or truth, have pronounced this heavy doom against them, that they should not inherit the kingdom of God. So that David having done two of the most notorious and vile works of the flesh, in the practice or perpetration of murder and adultery, and that, as hath been said, with circumstances of greatest aggravation, doubtless for the time whilst he remained impenitent, in or under the defilement of them, was obnoxious to that law of death, by which the workers of iniquity or of the works of the flesh, are sentenced with the deprivation or loss of their right and title to the kingdom of heaven: and consequently was not a godly person, or accepted with God. We have already profaned all those lawless sanctuaries, at which men being pursued by the Scriptures lately mentioned are wont to take shelter, as viz. 1. That the said places are not to be understood as applicable unto the saints, (they mean such as at any time have been saints,) but unto natural or unregenerate men only. 2. That saints have an absolute promise from God, that they shall never totally lose their faith. 3. That the saints sin only out of infirmity, and not premeditatedly, or with full consent: these allegements, with their fellows, we have once and again, in several places, upon occasion, clearly detected to be of the spurious and ignoble race of shifts and evasions, sought out by men for the gratification and relief of error, and to obstruct the truth in the course of it, that it might not run and be glorified.

But some object, that David prayed unto God, during his impenitency under the said sins ; and that this is a sufficient proof that he was all the while a person truly godly, and endued with justifying faith. I answer,

1. It no where appears that David did pray unto God during the term of his impenitency, or until Nathan the prophet came unto him, to awaken



his conscience unto a consideration of them. The 51st Psalm, which is indeed precatory and penitentiary, is in the title said to have been made by David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, (*i. e.* upon his coming unto him,) after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Which implies, that David was now in a posture of repentance, when he conceived the prayer expressed in this psalm.

2. Neither from one act of prayer, nor from many, can the truth or soundness of any man's faith be concluded. Our Saviour himself supposeth that hypocrites pray, and that often, Matt. 6:5; yea, and that the scribes and pharisees were wont to make long prayers, Matt. 23:14; and affirmeth, that they were liable to the greater damnation, upon the account of these prayers, in respect of the wicked ends intended in them. Yea, men may pray unto God with some degree or kind of acceptance with him, whilst they are yet hut unregenerate men, as some of our adversaries themselves, more considering than their fellows, do acknowledge. Nor doth that of the apostle, "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. 11:6, any ways contradict it: of which place we shall, I conceive, have occasion to speak more at large hereafter.

3. It is yet further the doctrine and sense of our adversaries, that reprohates themselves may have, and many times have, some excellent gifts of the Spirit conferred upon them; and among others the gift of prayer itself. So that were it granted, or could, it be proved, that David, under his impenitency for his crying sins, did pray, or was wont to pray unto God, it cannot be inferred from hence, that therefore he was not in an estate of reprobation, or destitute of the saving grace or favour of God. It is not necessary that he that totally falls away from saving faith, should be especially, on the sudden, divested or dispossessed of any, much less of all such gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are consistent with an estate of reprobation or unregeneracy.

4. If David was a true believer during the time of his "wallowing in the mire" of those two foul crimes, oft mentioned, then was not his "washing" by repentance necessary to his salvation. The reason is, because true faith giveth a sufficient right and title to salvation; and it is the main stream and current of the gospel, that "whosoever believeth shall he saved." But if David's washing by repentance was not necessary to his salvation, how can the Holy Ghost be justified in ranging "murderers and whoremongers" amongst those who "shall have their part in the lake

which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death?" Rev. 21:8; or in saying, that "no unclean thing shall enter into it, (the new Jerusalem,) neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination?" ver. 27; or, that "without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers," &c.? ver.15. Certainly "blood defileth" a person as well as a nation, or "land," Num. 35:33, when it is unrighteously spilt in it, and maketh as well the one as the other "unclean," until it be atoned. And for the sin of adultery, it is sufficiently known that the Holy Ghost presents it almost every where as polluting and defiling. So that David, during his impenitency aforesaid, was cut off from all right of entering into the new Jerusalem, both by the general irregularity of uncleanness, as also by the particular incapacities of murder and adultery.

5. If David were a true believer during the time of his departure and absence from God, then may the testimony of former and bypast works of righteousness be accepted by way of proof for the truth and soundness of any man's faith, against the testimony of later and more present fruits of unrighteousness against it. If so, then, 5.1, No man that hath approved himself a good Christian formerly ought upon any change whatsoever, upon the most unchristian miscarriages that can be imagined, to be judged an apostate from Christ, or, consequently, be upon any justifiable grounds cast out, by the sentence of excommunication, from any church of Christ whatsoever. Which supposed, no church, duly and regularly deporting itself in the admission of members, is in any capacity of using the said spiritual sword, in any case, or upon any occasion whatsoever. For certain it is, that no person who either is or ought to be judged by the church a true member of Christ, ought, by this church, to be cut off from his body, or to be delivered unto Satan; and as certain it is, that no person ought to receive admission into any church which is not looked upon by this church as a true member of Christ. 5.2. The said position admitted for truth, whereas the apostle James demandeth, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and *have* not works?" James 2:14, he might as well, or rather, have said, "and hath not had works." For by the tenor of the said doctrine, though a man wants present works, or works of a later edition or performance, whereby to show or manifest the truth of his faith unto men, yea, though his later works give never so pregnant or loud a testimony against the truth of his faith, yet if he can but say, and make proof, that formerly, though never so long before, he

hath been fruitful in well doing, this must be looked upon as sufficiently demonstrative of his faith. Which is notoriously contrary to the manifest bent and scope of the apostle's discourse in that place. 5.3. If the case were so, that men's former works, if good, must be heard against their later works, though never so bad, there is no place or possibility left either for hypocrisy or apostasy amongst men, especially not for this latter. For no man is to be judged an apostate but he that declines from the faith of Jesus Christ, which sometimes he professed, and gave sufficient ground unto men by his works to conceive and judge that he really was possessed of and held. So then, if such a man's former good works be still to be judged valid in their testimony concerning the goodness of his faith, how evil and vile soever his after works shall be, evident it is that such a man ought not to be esteemed an apostate, but a perseverer in the faith, though his ways and actions should degenerate into the highest strain of wickedness or ungodliness that can be imagined. 5.4, and lastly for this, That passage from God himself by his prophet Ezekiel, formerly opened, "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live ? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his *trespass* that he hath trespassed, and in his *sin* that he hath sinned, in them shall he die," Ezek. 18:24. This passage, I say, plainly evinceth that the estimate which is to be made of men in point of righteousness and unrighteousness, and, consequently, of faith and unbelief, is not to be made by the import or rule of their former works, but of their latter; no, not though the former have been many, and the latter but few. For the text saith, "In his trespass (in the singular number) that he hath trespassed shall he die;" implying that any one sin of that kind of sins which the Scripture calls "abominations," whilst unrepented of, translateth him from life unto death, casteth him into the state and condition of an unbeliever.

6, and lastly, If David's repentance, after the perpetration of the foul and horrid sins mentioned, was not simply necessary to his salvation, (and, consequently, himself, during his impenitency, a man of death,) God's sending his prophet Nathan unto him to awaken him, and raise him up by repentance, will be found to have little grace, love, or mercy in it, or at least far less than such a necessity of his repentance supposed would

derive upon it. Evident it is, from the tenor of the message which the prophet brought from God unto him, that his repentance did not exempt him from temporal judgments: “Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house.—Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before Israel, and before the sun,” 2 Sam, 12:9, &c. From whence, together with the event every ways answering, as the process of David’s history makes manifest, it is clear that David’s repentance did not sanctuary him from “troubles in the flesh” and outer man, no, not from such which were very sore and grievous to be suffered. Nor can it be supposed that it did deliver him from the wrath which, is to come, in case it he supposed that he was a true believer immediately before, and at the time of his repentance; because, this supposed, he was not liable unto this wrath, nor in danger of suffering it; in which case, his deliverance from it is to be ascribed, not to his present repentance, but to his precedent faith.

Nor can it be said that God’s sending Nathan unto David upon such terms of grace as have been mentioned, argueth any election from eternity of David, personally or particularly considered, though it be true that he doth not vouchsafe the like terms of grace or means of repentance unto all other sinners. Because, 6.1. If David was a true believer, and so in an estate of grace, when Nathan came unto him, he was under the wing of election, and in the way of life and salvation; and consequently this sending to him by God did neither argue, pro nor con, such his election. 6.2. There might be some equitable consideration on David’s behalf, though not known unto us, on which God might ground a dispensation of more grace and mercy towards him than towards other sinners, in whom the like consideration is not to be found. For though we affirm and hold, that reasons in the general may be given, even by men, to evince an equitableness or reasonableness in all the ways of God, yet we do not say but that there are many special and particular reasons of his actions and ways, which are known only to himself, and are not assignable by men.

That God dealt equitably by David in vouchsafing unto him those signal means of repentance, which he did; and that he deals as equitably by such sinners, to whom he denieth the like means, may be clearly proved from the nature and import of that great attribute of his, which the Scripture calls *ἀντροσωποληψία*, 1 Pet. 1:17, or a non-acceptation of persons, as likewise from that equality in all his ways which the Scripture with no less evidence asserteth, Ezek. 18:25, 29. But why, or how it should be equitable in him to make such a difference between David and many other sinners, between whom notwithstanding he maketh it, may very possibly be indemonstrable by men; because all the qualifying circumstances on David's side, or of David's sins, are not known unto men as they are unto God; neither are all the aggravating circumstances of the sins of other sinners known unto them as they are also unto him. Which considered, evident it is, that God may have, yea, and questionless hath, equitable and reasonable grounds, and these in or from the persons themselves and their ways, between whom he maketh any such difference as that now in discourse, though these be investigable or past finding out by men. And why God should not give a reason or account (*i. e.* a special or particular account) of any of his matters, as Elihu speaketh, Job 33:13, the reason is so near at hand, that I shall not need to bring it any whit nearer by naming it or by insisting upon it. 6.3, and lastly, In case there should be found any other sinner whatsoever like unto David in all circumstances relating unto sin and righteousness, it is little questionable but that in like case of guilt and present impenitency, means of like grace and efficacy, though not literally or formally the same, in order to his repentance, would be vouchsafed unto him which were granted unto David.

A second Old Testament instance of a total recidivation from grace or true faith we find in Solomon. That Solomon before his fell by idolatry, and other sinful miscarriages, of which more presently, was a true believer, a regenerate man, a son of God, is the constant opinion of those that teach an impossibility of a total falling away from grace : I do not know any one of them otherwise minded. However, his writings being so full of heavenly wisdom and knowledge, as they are on all hands confessed to be, give a liberal testimony unto their author, that he was a man truly fearing God, and held communion with him. And Nehemiah, speaking of Solomon, saith, that "Among many nations there was no king

like unto him: for he was *beloved of his God*," &c., Neh. 13:26. Other proofs and arguments there are demonstrative enough of the truth and soundness of Solomon's faith, before those sad and high misdemeanors of his reported in the Scriptures; but seeing we have confitentes reos, the confession of our adversaries themselves in the point, we shall make no further labour of the proof of it.

Again, that Solomon sinned at a very high rate of wickedness and provocation, is nothing hut what the same persons freely enough acknowledge. And in the Synod of Dort itself a prime member thereof publicly said, that "Solomon practised in sin and wickedness, whatsoever the lust and licentiousness of a king could stretch themselves unto." The sad history of his wickedness is drawn up by the Holy Ghost himself, 1 Kings 11:1, &c., where, having reported his disobedience to the law of God, by which the Israelites were prohibited to marry with the daughters of a strange god, in taking unto him no fewer than seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines of the women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, &c., and withal, the several abominable idolatries, wherewith he came to be polluted hereby, he adds, that "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father; that he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; that he went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father; that the Lord was angry with him because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel," &c. I am no enemy to their opinion who affirm that Solomon returned back again to the Lord God of Israel by way of repentance but assuredly during all that wallowing in the mire mentioned, under the pollution and guilt of all those abominations charged by the Holy Ghost upon him, his hack was towards him, and his person under the dint of that heavy doom which is denounced against idolaters and all that work abomination, viz. exclusion from the kingdom of God, as hath been largely shown already. The nakedness of such allegations and washy pretences, which are commonly laid hold on to make Solomon a true believer and son of God, during his most dreadful apostasy from him, lately described, hath been detected, both in the last preceding chapter, as likewise in the late examination of David's case. So that we may without fear of the least breach of charity, or of judging any unrighteous judgment, conclude, that Solomon, whilst his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel to walk after other gods, as after Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, after Molech and

Milcom, the abominations of the children of Ammon, after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, &c., and during his obduration and impenitency, in these horrid ways and practices, was an enemy unto God, and God unto him, and the former relation between them of father and son wholly dissolved. They that hold or teach otherwise both represent God altogether unlike unto himself, rendering him a most unworthy acceptor of persons, and besides cut the sinews of the credit and authority of the Scriptures, which still number idolaters and workers of iniquity amongst those who shall have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. But of these things enough formerly. Yet let us hear what the patrons of the common doctrine of perseverance have to plead for the life of Solomon's faith, even whilst he walked in those ways of death, whereof we heard so lately. Solomon, say they, could not fall away totally from his faith, nor from the saving love of God, because God had promised unto David his father, that he "Would be a Father unto him, (his son Solomon,) and that he should be a son unto him; and that his mercy should not depart from him, as he took it from Saul," 2 Sam. 7:14, 15. I answer,

1. Evident it is, that the mercy, or kindness of God, here mentioned, was vouchsafed by him, as well unto Saul, as unto Solomon. For his promise is, that he would not take away his mercy, or kindness, as some translate, from the latter, as he took it (i. e. the same mercy) from the former, Saul. If then the mercy here spoken of, was the saving mercy of God, out of which he purposeth to give eternal life, then Saul was elect, and a child of God, and yet fell totally and finally away, and had this grace, or mercy, of election, taken from him. If it be a mercy, or kindness, of any other kind, the insisting upon it is altogether irrelative to the business in hand.

2. When God saith, that "his mercy should not depart from Solomon," the meaning clearly is, that God would not translate the kingdom into another family, or line, as he had transferred it from Saul and his house, but would continue it in David's line by Solomon. The words immediately following, make the face of this interpretation to shine. "And thine *house*, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." Verse 16.

3, and lastly, It appears from words spoken by David unto his son Solomon a little before his death, that he understood the mercy, or kindness, promised unto Solomon, not of the saving mercy of God, which,

according to the sense of our opposers, is unremovable wherever it be once pitched, but of such a mercy, as hath been declared. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, *he will cast thee off for ever,*" 1 Chron. 28:9. Therefore David himself did not apprehend any such mercy to be entailed or settled upon his son Solomon by God, in the promise mentioned, as our adversaries imagine.

Nor is that, which was thought upon by a great man in the Synod of Dort, of any whit more value, to prove the standing of Solomon's faith, whilst himself fell so foully, as we have heard. It is the testimony, which Solomon himself gives concerning himself, in these words: "Also my wisdom remained with me," Eccles. 2:9. From hence this author judged it a legitimate inference, that Solomon remained sound in his faith, whilst he halted right down, yea, and fell desperately, as we have heard, before God. But, as the Proverb is, *Similes habent labra lactucas*, like lips, like lattuces: such as this man's cause is, such is his argument, or plea for it. For what is there in the words cited, any ways to justify Solomon's faith, whilst himself fell into that fearful condemnation, which hath oft been declared? It is true, wisdom sometimes in Scripture signifies, the true, sound, and saving knowledge of God, sometimes a religious frame of heart, inclining a man to a conscientious observation of all the laws and precepts of God. But unless it could be proved, that it always is found in one of these two significations, and never in any other, which is a task that would prove a reproach to any man's parts and learning, that should undertake it, it is no ways reasonable to put either of these upon it in the place in hand. For there is nothing more clear, than that Solomon speaketh here of that wisdom, which, as he saith in the former chapter, verse 13: "he gave his heart to know," and which consisteth in the observation, experience, and knowledge of the "things that are done under heaven;" in which also he affirmeth that there is much grief, and vexation of spirit, &c. verses 17, 18: which, when he had attained, he declares, chap. 2., that he fell to the practical part of it, and gave himself to the procurement and enjoyment of the pleasures, and all the contentments, that the world is able to afford unto men, and which men generally seek after, according to the best of their understandings, and



opportunities otherwise. And having particularized several of his principal enjoyments in this kind, verses 3—6, &c. he concludes from the said inventory, or survey, verse 9, thus: “ So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem;” adding, “ also my wisdom remained with me,” in the original, stood by me, or to me, meaning, that he was very circumspect and careful, not to destroy, maim, or prejudice, that principle of wisdom, which he had travelled so long for, and by which he had raised himself to a far greater estate, in honours, riches, pleasures and contentments in the world, than any other man; careful, I say, he professeth himself to have been, not to endamage or prejudice this his wisdom, by those abundant pleasures and delights, whereof he stood possessed, and which he freely enjoyed, as many are apt to do upon such occasions, and by such means. Afterwards, though he prefers that wisdom, which he had spoken of hitherto, above folly, *i. e.* above a brutish and sottish ignorance of such things, which concern a man’s interest of peace and comfort in the world, chap. 2:13: yet he acknowledgeth a vanity in this also, inasmuch as after a short and inconsiderable space of time, the case and condition of such a fool, will be every whit as good, as of a wise man. “Then I said in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me: and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity:—and how dieth the wise man, as the fool!” &c. So that by the wisdom, which Solomon saith remained with him, in the fullest enjoyment of the delights and contentments of the world, is clearly meant, not a sacred, but a politic or civil wisdom, which first he gave his heart to seek, and afterwards, having obtained it, improved, to the rendering of his condition in the world every ways as desirable, as the materials of the world, under the best improvement, would make it. And besides, evident it is from what hath been said, and from the carnage of the context, both before, and after, and indeed from the scope and purport of the whole book, that Solomon, in the place in hand, doth not speak of his latter times, wherein he turned aside after idols, and said to the stock, or graven image, “Deliver me: for thou art my god;” Isa. 44:17: wherein he heaped up strange women, wives and concubines, as before he had done wisdom, “ like the sand upon the sea shore” innumerable ; as if his meaning were, that all the while he dishonoured himself by serving the devil in these gross, brutish, and unmanlike courses, his religious wisdom, his sound

and saving knowledge of the true God, remained with him : but of his middle, most prosperous, and flourishing times, when he was to be seen in all his glory, when, as himself said, the “ Lord had given him rest, or peace, on every side, so that he had neither adversary, nor evil occurrent,” 1 Kings 5:4. And his meaning, as hath been said, clearly is, that the great heat of all this outward prosperity did not dissolve the spirit or strength of that wisdom, which made his face to shine in the eyes of all the nations and princes of the world round about him: which wisdom, did not so much, if at all, stand in the devoutness of his heart or soul towards God, as in the knowledge of natural and civil things; as it is described, 1 Kings 4. from verse 29 to the end of the chapter. Concerning idols, and idolaters, the father had said before, “they that make them, are like unto them,” (*i. e.* as Mr. J. Deodat himself, who is the man that pretended to find Solomon’s faith alive in the words in hand, whilst Solomon himself was dead in Baal, or in some of Baal’s companions, interprets it, “stupid and blind, as the idols themselves are,”) “and so is every one that trusteth in them,” Psa. 115:8. Therefore, questionless, the son, after his return from that folly, would not have pleaded the standing of his wisdom by him, whilst he was an idolater, and patron of idols. But the truth is, that the words insisted upon are every ways so inconsiderable in point of proof, for the continuance of Solomon’s faith during his continuance in his idolatries, that the recourse made to them for proof hereof, is an argument to me very considerable, that the patrons of that opinion are extremely straitened and put to it, through want of so much as any tolerable argument or proof, for the maintaining of it. It is a sign that the soul is hungry indeed, when every bitter thing becomes sweet unto it.

Thus then we clearly find that there is no special or particular ground or argument at all, of any value, to prove that either David the father, during his impenitency after the horrid crimes of murder and adultery perpetrated by him, or that Solomon the son, during the like impenitency in him upon his idolatrous backslidings, did retain any saving principle of grace or faith in them; but that, during their respective impenitencies, they were children of wrath, liable to the same sentence of condemnation with the promiscuous multitude, or generality of murderers and idolaters, for the proof whereof, several pregnant arguments have been levied from the Scriptures. As for such arguments and grounds by which the certain perseverance of the saints in general, in the truth and

soundness of their faith, is commonly pleaded and maintained, they have been formerly weighed in the balance of the sanctuary and found too light. So that we may very safely conclude, that both David and Solomon were not only under a possibility of a total falling away from the grace of God, wherein they sometimes stood, which is common to all the saints, but that they taught the world the truth and certainty of such a possibility by reducing it into act, I mean by falling away totally from it.

Neither are examples of the like sad miscarriages wanting in the New Testament. The apostle speaks of some in his days, who “having put away a good conscience concerning faith, made shipwreck” thereby, 1 Tim. 1:19. And in another place, speaking of the dangerous doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection was already past, he saith, that they overthrew, or destroyed, the faith of some, 2 Tim. 2:17. Elsewhere, he speaks of some who were “then turned aside after Satan,” 1 Tim. 5:15. They, who by putting away a good conscience made shipwreck of faith, must needs he supposed, (1.) To have had true faith; (2.) To suffer an absolute or total loss of it. For the first, If we shall suppose that they, who put away a good conscience from them, had. it, or were possessed of it before such their putting it away, we must suppose withal that they had true saving faith; because, goodness of conscience cannot take place but only where such a faith gives being unto it, which, in that respect, is said to “purify the heart,” Acts 15:9; as on the contrary, the very “minds and consciences of unbelievers are said to be defiled,” Tit. 1:15. Nor doth the Scripture any where, to my best remembrance, speak of a good or pure conscience, but where the goodness of it is supposed to flow from a sound knowledge of the will of God, in conjunction with an upright desire of doing all things according to the tenor of the truth known. “The end of the commandment,” saith the apostle in this very chapter, “is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,” 1 Tim. 1:5. So again, “Pray for us, for we trust we have a *good conscience*, in all things willing to live honestly,” Heb. 13:8. Another apostle exhorteth Christians to “sanctify the Lord in their hearts, and to be ready always to give an answer unto every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear, having a *good conscience*,” &c. 1 Pet. 3:15, 16. A little after, he placeth the sum and substance of true Christianity in a good conscience. “The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us; not the

putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (or demand) of a *good conscience* towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” verse 21; meaning to add this by the way, that baptism, typified or presignified by the ark, wherein Noah and his family were presented from perishing with the rest of the world by water, doth contribute towards our salvation from the condemnation of the world round about us for sin, not so much by the letter or material effect of it, but by typifying, holding forth, and assuring us that a good conscience, raised or built upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the sound knowledge hereof, doth require or demand this salvation of God, and that according to the promise and encouragement given unto it by himself in that behalf, and therefore so as that it shall not, cannot, be denied, of what it demandeth of Him in this kind. But that a pure, which only is the good, conscience still springeth from a sound faith in Jesus Christ, and is found in conjunction with it, these places, 1 Tim. 3:9; Heb. 9:14; 10:22, compared together and added to the former, are sufficient to persuade. And concerning the place in hand, some of our best and most orthodox expositors understand the good conscience mentioned to be none other. Musculus, upon the words, “Which” (good conscience) “some having put away concerning faith,” &c., commenteth thus, “Here he speaketh the same which before he had expressed thus, ‘Now the end of the commandment’ (or charge which I give thee) ‘is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, from which some going astray have turned aside to vain jangling,’ ” &c. His words immediately following, to which I refer the reader, are every whit as plain and pregnant to the same point: showing, that by a good conscience, he doth not understand a conscience only morally good, and such as may be found in mere natural men ignorant of Christ and the gospel, but a conscience spiritually or Christianly good. Nor is Bullinger, his compeer, of any other mind. “The safest ship,” saith he, upon the place, “in this vast sea of a world of errors and wickednesses, is canonical (or scriptural) truth, pure faith, and sincere charity.” In which words he explains the apostle’s good conscience by sincereness of love or charity. Nor could Calvin himself finish what he had to say upon the place, until he had given testimony to the same truth. “The metaphor, saith he, “taken from shipwreck answereth most aptly. For it implies that the course of our navigation (in the world) must be steered by a good conscience, that so

our faith may come safe into the haven, otherwise we shall be in danger of shipwreck.” Doubtless, he doth not mean that the course of our navigation through the world, that so our faith may come safe into the harbour, should be steered or guided by a mere moral conscience, how good soever in this kind, or by such a conscience as Cato, Socrates, or Seneca had, or might have had. Such a conscience as this is no fit steersman or guide to such a faith, with which, or by which, they must make the port of heaven, whoever arrive there. Therefore, certainly he conceiveth that it is such a good conscience, the putting away of which the apostle renders as the ground, reason, or cause why some make shipwreck of faith, the goodness whereof ariseth from such a faith which accompanieth salvation, and which being carefully preserved and kept, preserveth and keepeth that faith from whence it sprang, from corruption or declining.

Concerning the two places which are commonly insisted upon, to prove that a good conscience in Scripture doth not always signify a conscience Christianly, spiritually, or savingly good, but sometimes morally good only, *i.e.* which is not defiled or disturbed in the peace of it, with sins against knowledge, (which goodness of conscience is sometimes found in mere civil or natural men,) though destitute of evangelical illumination; the truth is, that neither the one nor the other of them proveth any such thing. In the former of these places, the apostle Paul speaketh thus: “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day,” Acts 23:1. In the latter, thus: “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience,” &c. 2 Tim.1:3. For neither of these places do necessarily, nor so much as probably relate to the time of Paul’s pharisaism, as if his meaning were, that all that time he had kept a good conscience towards God, (for how could he, then, with truth or singleness of heart, have made this confession, “Of sinners I am the chief?” 1 Tim. 1:15,) but to the time of his apostleship, or profession of Christianity, as appears clearly, from the former place, upon this account. Paul was accused by the Jews, as an apostate from the religion of his forefathers, and the true worship of God, as they supposed, and that he was fallen from Judaism to the sect of Christians, yea, and was become a ringleader of them. This they conceived to have been a high misdemeanor in him, and accused him as a very wicked and ungodly person for so doing. To this accusation and crime objected, the apostle answers to this

effect: “Men and brethren, whereas I have forsaken the religion and worship of the Jews, and have embraced, and do yet embrace the Christian religion instead of it, I have done nothing, I do nothing herein, but upon very justifiable grounds, and with a good conscience, inasmuch as I have obeyed God in so doing; of which I am ready to give you a perfect account, if you please to hear me.” This to be the true purport and drift of the apostle’s words, the sequel of the context makes yet more apparent. For, upon the hearing of the words in debate uttered by him, Ananias the high priest was sorely offended, and commanded the standers-by to smite him on the mouth, for so speaking. Now it is no ways reasonable to conceive that he would have taken it so heinously that Paul should say that he had always lived in all good conscience before God, whilst he professed Judaism, and before he became a Christian. Such a saying as this would rather have gratified and pleased, than offended him. But that he should say that he lived with all good conscience in the profession of Christianity, this was a sword that passed through Ananias’ soul.

For the other place, where the apostle saith, that he served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience, his meaning only is, that he serves none other God, but him whom his forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped, and that him he served with a pure conscience, as they also did. To qualify the Jews, who took great offence at him for changing his religion, and withal to make this practice of his more passable with others, he oft recourseth to this apology, viz. that in the profession of Christianity, he serves no other God but the God of his forefathers. See Acts 22:14; 24:14; 26:7; 28:20, &c. In this sense Calvin himself interprets the place in hand, on which he hath these words, amongst others of like import, “Certain it is, that Paul’s conscience was not always pure, inasmuch as himself confesseth, that through hypocrisy he was deceived, when he indulged himself a liberty of lusting. For whereas Chrysostom excuseth his pharisaism, in that he opposed the gospel out of ignorance and not out of malice, it no ways satisfieth. For the eulogy, or commendation, of a pure conscience is not vulgar or common; neither can it be separated from the sincere and serious fear of God. Therefore I restrain his words to the present time, thus: ‘That he worshipped one and the same God with his forefathers: but now, since he was enlightened by the gospel, he worshippeth him with a sincere affection of heart’” and

soul. It were easy to second Calvin, with several others of his own band, in the interpretation mentioned: but when little is to be done, much help is but a burden. Thus then we see, that by a good conscience, which some putting away, make shipwreck of faith, as the apostle saith, must needs be meant such a conscience which hath its goodness from true faith, and cannot be separated from it: and?, consequently, that the persons here spoken of, were, or had been true believers.

Besides, that faith, of which some are said to have made shipwreck, cannot reasonably be supposed to have been a feigned, counterfeit, or pretended faith only, nor any thing accompanying destruction; because it is such a faith which the apostle exhorts and encourageth Timothy to hold fast, “holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith, (which I advise thee to hold and keep,) have made shipwreck.” Doubtless the apostle would not have persuaded Timothy to hold or keep such a faith with which he might perish: nor had the making shipwreck of no better a commodity than so, been any such great loss unto him. (3.) That faith which he exhorteth Timothy to hold, must needs be supposed to be that faith which he was possessed of at present, and which was now in him. And that this was a true faith, appears from several passages in the two epistles written by this apostle unto him, especially from those words, “When I call to remembrance *the unfeigned faith* that is in thee, which, dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois,” &c. 2 Tim. 1:5. (4.) The faith which he exhorts Timothy to hold, and, consequently, the faith whereof he admonisheth him that some made shipwreck, by the means specified, must in reason be such a faith of which he had discoursed before in the chapter. Now this was a faith unfeigned, out of which that charity or love floweth, which he saith is the end of the commandment, 1 Tim. 1:5; such a faith, of which he speaks, (a few verses before the place in hand,) in reference to himself, thus: “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus,” ver. 14; such a faith by which men were to believe on Christ to life everlasting, ver. 16.

(5,) and lastly, The faith here spoken of, is such a faith, in the retention or holding whereof the warring of a good warfare consists. This is evident from the context, and connexion between this and the next preceding verse. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee,” (*i.e.* according to the sense and

judgments of the prophets, or interpreters of the Scriptures, who unanimously agreed in this, that thou wert a person fit for the work of the ministry, and by all means oughtest to be called thereunto,) “that thou by them,” *i.e.* being encouraged by them, “mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience,” &c. Now if by faith should be meant nothing hut only an outward profession of the gospel, or the doctrine thereof, Timothy might have held these, and yet not have warred a good warfare. For who will say that Judas warred a good warfare, who yet held an outward profession of the gospel, and preached the doctrine thereof truly? And it is generally granted by those, who by faith, in the place in hand, will needs understand the doctrine of the gospel, that men who are no good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who are destitute of sound and saving faith, may yet hold, yea, hold fast, the doctrine of the gospel, yea, and this to the suffering of death itself for it. Therefore, questionless, the faith of which the apostle speaks in the place before us, is a true, sound, and saving faith.

Nor is this any thing but the sense and judgment of very learned and orthodox expositors upon the place. Musculus affirmeth, that the apostle “speaks here the same thing which before he had expressed in these words: But the end of this commandment (or charge) is love, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned; from which whilst some went astray, they turned aside to vain jangling,” &c. Presently after, the apostle, he saith, “admonisheth us, that they cannot have a good conscience who are strangers unto charity, a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; and, moreover, that upon the putting away of a good conscience, we are in imminent danger of making shipwreck of *the true faith* and religion of Christ.” Therefore, doubtless, it came not near the thoughts of this author to conceive that any other faith should be meant in the place in hand but only that which was “true and unfeigned.” Calvin also recovered himself before the end of his commentary on the Scripture in hand, and asserteth the same interpretation. His words upon this account, to save transcription, are to be seen in page 464. J. Deodat, in his pious Annotations upon the Bible, interpreteth the word “faith,” in the passage in hand, as his words are Englished, thus: “Faith, viz. sufficient knowledge, full assurance, and *sincere* profession of the truth of the gospel.” So that there is not only ground upon ground, reason upon reason, to demonstrate, that by “faith,” in the Scripture under



consideration, must needs be meant a true, solid, and sincere faith, and not the bare doctrine of faith only ; but author upon author also, and expositor upon expositor, and these orthodox, to avouch the same interpretation. Therefore the first of the two particulars mentioned is unquestionable, viz. that that “faith” whereof the apostle saith “some made shipwreck,” was a true justifying faith, and such, wherein had they persevered unto the end, would have been accompanied with salvation.

The latter we shall not need to insist upon, it being generally granted by our adversaries, that by “making shipwreck” of the “faith” here spoken of, what faith soever it be, is meant the utter, absolute, and total loss of it. All expositors, without exception, that I have seen, are unanimous in this.

The line of the same interpretation is to be stretched over the other Scripture also, mentioned as parallel with the former, wherein Hymenaeus and Philetus are said to have “overthrown the faith of some,” by teaching that the “resurrection” was “past already,

2 Tim. 2:18. That by “overthrowing,” is meant an utter and total subversion or destruction of the “faith” mentioned, is every man's sense upon the place. So that the proof hereof would be but an impertinency. That the “faith” here said to have been “overthrown” by the doctrine mentioned, was a true justifying faith, appears clearly from the context. In the verse next before, the apostle had said, “And their word will eat (or fret) as doth a canker, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus.” Now it is the nature and property of this ulcerous disease, not to prey, feed upon; or consume only the corrupt humours, or putrefied members of the body, which would tend rather to its preservation than destruction, but those especially that are most vital and sound, yea, and this to the extinguishing life itself. Calvin, upon the place, affirms this as the judgment of all physicians: “All physicians,” saith he, “affirm this to be the nature of a (cancer, or) gangrene, that without very present help, (against it,) it spreads to the parts adjoining, and eats into the bones themselves, and gives not over its prevailing progress until the man dieth. For inasmuch as upon a gangrene a mortification or sideration presently followeth, which very suddenly with its contagion infects the other parts, to the universal destruction of the body, Paul elegantly compareth adulterate (or erroneous) doctrines to such a pernicious contagion. For if you shall once give way unto them, they will proceed and prevail to the destruction of the whole church.” If “erroneous doctrines” may possibly “prevail to

the destruction of the whole church," doubtless they may as possibly, yea, much more possibly, "destroy the faith" of some true believers; considering that the whole church is not made up of hypocrites or formal professors only, but hath many sound and sincere believers in it. Therefore Calvin, in the interpretation asserted, is either with us, or against himself. His successor also, though after some descents, Mr. J. Deodat, in his said Annotations, commenteth the words "and their word will eat," &c., thus: "Being once admitted into the soul, it will penetrate to the total extinguishing of the *spiritual life* thereof." Therefore he likewise, by the "faith" said to be "overthrown" by Hymenaeus and Philetus their doctrine, clearly understandeth such a faith by which men live spiritually.

In the verse immediately following, the apostle subjoineth, by way of antithesis, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his : and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. 2:19. The words in the original are these:

Ὁ μίντοι στερεός Ἀεμίχιος τον Θίου ἴστηκεν, &c. i.e. "the stable," or sure, "foundation of God," standeth, or "hath stood," &c. In these words the apostle preventeth a scruple or objection which might possibly arise in the minds of some, upon occasion of what he had said concerning Hymenaeus and Philetus their forsaking of the truth, and the overthrow of the faith of some others by means of their error. The scruple or objection is this: If such men of note professing the Christian religion as Hymenaeus and Philetus were, grew out of liking of that faith which sometimes they professed, and forsook it, and besides prevailed with some others also to relinquish their faith, are not we in danger of falling away likewise, and so of losing all that we have either done or suffered hitherto in a Christian profession ? To this objection or scruple, the apostle, in the words now in hand, answereth to this effect: That notwithstanding the falling away of men, whoever, or how many soever they be, yet the glorious gospel and truth of God therein, stands, and always hath stood, firm, stedfast, and inviolable ; which gospel hath the matter and substance of this saying in it as a seal for the establishment and security of those that are upright in the sight of God, viz. that "God knoweth," i. e. takes special notice of, approveth, and delighteth in "those that are his," i. e. who truly believe in him, love, and serve him ; yea, and further, hath this item or heavenly admonition in it, tending to the same

end, the firm establishing of those that are God's in the way of their faith —“ Let every one that calleth upon the name of Christ,” *i. e.* makes profession of his name, “depart from iniquity.” So that in this answer to the scruple or demand mentioned, the apostle intimateth, by way of satisfaction, that the reason why men fall away from the faith of the gospel is, partly, because they do not seriously consider what gracious and worthy respects God beareth to “those that are his,” *i. e.* who cleave to him in faith and love ; partly, also, because they degenerate into loose and sinful courses, contrary to the law imposed by the gospel upon all those in especial manner that profess Christianity, and consequently that there is no such danger of their falling away who shall duly and thoroughly consider the one and conscientiously observe the other. In asserting the stability of the truth of God in the gospel, by way of antidote against the fears of those that may possibly suspect it because of the defection of others from it, he doth but tread in his own footsteps elsewhere, as, *viz.* where he saith, as he doth a few verses before in this very chapter, “If we believe not,” *i. e.* though we men believe not what he hath promised, “ yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself,” 2 Tim. 2:13; as if he should say, The unbelief of men, whether of those who never so much as pretended to believe in him, or of those who have revolted from their faith, ought not in reason to be so construed or looked upon as if it were any argument or proof that therefore God should be unfaithful or untrue, considering that it is altogether impossible with his nature and being to “deny himself,” *i. e.* either to say in words, or to import by action, that he is not a God; the latter of which he should do in case he should promise and not perform accordingly, though it be too well consistent with the nature of men thus to deny him. So likewise where he saith, to the same point, “What if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect ?” *i. e.* shall the unbelief of men be interpreted as any tolerable argument or ground to prove that God is unfaithful ? or, which is the same, that he hath no other, no better faith in him, than that which sometimes miscarrieth and produceth not that for which it stands engaged? implying, that such an interpretation as this is unreasonable in the highest. But to give a little further light to the Scripture opened, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth,” and to the interpretation lately given, it is to be considered that the word *Ἀμείχιος*,

translated “foundation,” doth not only signify the foundation of a house, building, or the like, but a bond or instrument in writing, whereby he that lendeth money or intrusteth goods unto another is wont to be secured by him who borroweth or is intrusted, that he shall duly receive what he hath contracted for with him. Such a writing or instrument as this is a kind of politic or civil foundation on which the creditor builds a rational hope or expectation of receiving from his debtor what is equitably and upon promise due unto him. Now, that the apostle, in the words in hand, rather alludeth to such a “foundation” as this, if it must be so called, than unto that other, is very probable, at least, from hence, viz. because to this latter kind of foundation, which I call politic or civil, sealing is most proper; whereas it cannot be ascribed unto the other but by a very improper, strained, uncouth, and unheard-of attribution. For who hath heard of the sealing of a foundation of a house or building? or to what end or purpose should such a foundation as this be sealed? But writings for the security of contracts or engagements between man and man, are, by the custom of almost all nations, wont to be sealed, yea, and are not authentic, or valid in law, unless they be sealed. So that, by the “sure” or firm “foundation” of God, which is said to “stand,” how fast soever men fall from the belief of it, questionless is meant that gracious contract or covenant made by God with the world to give life and salvation to all those that shall believe in Jesus Christ; which covenant is now exhibited in writing unto those concerned in it, men, as a foundation for all men to build a hope and expectation of life and salvation upon, according to the tenor and terms of it. This foundation is said to be *σπρωγς*, “firm,” or stable, because it is such in the nature of it, as being nothing else but the word or promise of a God who “cannot lie” or deceive: it is said to “stand,” or to have stood, *ίστηκε*, because it never failed any person that built upon it. It is said to have this seal, “The Lord knoweth who are his,” because the firmness or stability of it is further confirmed unto men by that perfect knowledge, declared and asserted in it, which God taketh and hath of all those who truly believe, whereby they become appropriately his; by means of which knowledge and approbation he is in a perfect capacity to make this signal difference between them and others who believe not, or revolt from their faith, viz. to save the one and to destroy the other when time comes. Again, it is said to have this “seal” also, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from evil,” because the

said truth and stedfastness of it is yet further commended and ratified unto men by the holiness of the commandments given in it unto those that profess the name and faith of Christ. A promise or covenant of life and salvation is therefore likely to be from God, and consequently to be stable and firm, because it requires such an excellency of life and conversation of all those who expect benefit by it. However, that, by the “foundation of God,” in the place in hand, should be meant the election of some particular persons by God, hath neither the good-will of the metaphor or phrase, nor yet of the context, for it; of which more hereafter in due place.

We have formerly observed it as Chrysostom’s judgment concerning Judas, that at that time, when Christ made this promise unto the twelve, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” Matt. 19:28, Judas was, as well in respect of the inward frame of his heart, as of his outward conversation, in the same capacity, with the rest of the apostles, of “sitting upon a throne to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, *i. e.* of being saved. This opinion of his concerning Judas, he argues and proves from the said promise; which, he judgeth, cannot be verified, unless it be supposed that Judas, one of the twelve, was at this time under the grace of it, and in such a relation and condition God-ward, wherein had he persevered, he should actually have been a partaker of the glory promised, with his fellows. We took knowledge likewise, in the place related unto, that P. Martyr approved the said judgment of this father, together with the ground and reason of it; delivering unto us, upon occasion thereof, this most true and necessary rule, viz., that “Those promises of God are to be understood with reference to the present state and condition of things,” with those, to whom they were made. And Lorinus, writing upon Acts 1:16, reports it as the probable opinion of Cyril, Jerome, Tertullian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Basil, Ammonius, Leontius, Olympiodorus, Anastasius, Leo, Euthymius, &c., that Judas, when he was chosen by Christ to be an apostle, was a good man, and so continued for some time afterwards: and withal mentioneth the grounds upon which some of the said authors so conceived of him. We shall not need to argue the case of Demas, Alexander, Hymenaeus, and several others, whose revoltings from the faith are recorded in the Scriptures.

Concerning the two latter of the three now mentioned, Hymenaeus and Alexander, it is expressly said, that they were delivered up unto Satan by the apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 1:20. Which plainly sheweth, 1. That they were judged meet by the saints to be received as church-members by them. For otherwise the apostle demands, “What have I to do to judge them that are without?” 1 Cor. 5:12; meaning, to inflict any ecclesiastical or church-censure upon those who were not members of some Christian church, or other. And if they were judged meet by the saints of that church, who admitted them into Christian communion with them, they were judged true believers by them: and their judgment of them as being true believers, is a far better ground for us to judge them to have been such also, than their apostasy is to judge them to have been hypocrites, at that time, when they judged them true believers. 2. Their delivering up unto Satan by the apostle sheweth, that he judged them totally fallen from their faith, and so dismembered from Christ: for otherwise he should have delivered up unto Satan such persons whom he judged true members of Christ. There is the like consideration of the incestuous person in the church of Corinth. His receiving into this church, is more than a probable argument that he was at this time a true believer. Nor is there the least intimation given of any difference between him, and the rest of the members of this church, whom the apostle termeth “saints by calling,” and, “sanctified by Christ Jesus.” And if he were not a true member of Christ, before the committing of the sin for which he was delivered up unto Satan by the apostle, he sustained no great loss in his spiritual condition, either by committing the said sin, or by being so delivered up for it. For upon this supposition, he was no better than a hypocrite before, and worse he could not lightly be afterwards. And besides, the tenor and import of the sentence of excommunication, is not declarative, that the person sentenced never was a sound believer, or true member of Christ, but that now by his sinful misdemeanor, whereby he incurreth that sentence, he hath dismembered himself from him. Nor can the said sentence be duly styled a delivering up unto Satan, if it must be still supposed, that the persons justly sentenced herewith had been always, before the said sentence, as much under his power, as they are or can be afterwards. So that, all circumstances considered, it cannot reasonably be judged, but that the person now in instance had sometimes been a true member of Christ, and believer. But that he sinned away this

his blessed relation, by that sin for which he was delivered up unto Satan, needs no other proof, but the apostle's express order for this sentence to pass upon him, 1 Cor. 5:3—5. “For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have determined already, as though I were present, that he that hath done this thing, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that such an one, I say, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, be delivered unto Satan,” &c. Doubtless this apostle, who professeth that he “could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,” never consented, much less commanded, that any true member of Christ should be delivered unto Satan. But, as hath been said, the cause in hand standeth in no need of confirmation from these examples; the serviceableness whereof for such a purpose, may possibly be evaded with more plausibleness of pretence than the former. Any one instance of a total declining in him, who hath at any time been a true believer, is sufficient to prove the truth of the doctrine under maintenance : yea, as was said in the beginning of this chapter, though no such instance could be produced, yet may the said doctrine receive demonstrative evidence, and this in abundance, otherwise: and, I trust, hath received it from the premises in this discourse. Yet give me leave to add one instance more.

Concerning the Galatians, unto whom the apostle Paul writeth, any man that shall diligently peruse the epistle written unto them, cannot lightly but conclude, that certainly these men, I mean the generality of them, and more particularly those for whose sake especially the epistle was written, were sometimes, viz. when Paul left them, after he had preached the gospel for a while unto them, true believers, and persons justified in the sight of God; and afterwards, viz. when he wrote the epistle unto them, had suffered a total loss of their faith, and of justification by it. That they were sometimes true believers, these passages compared, and laid together, are sufficiently pregnant, I conceive, to give satisfaction unto any duly considering man. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel,” Gal. i. 6. Their removal from him that called them, &c., plainly supposeth, that sometimes they had cleaved unto him, viz. in the cordial embracement of that gospel which he had sent amongst them, and by which he had called them. So again: “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” chap. 3:2, 5. The

receiving of the Spirit, is still appropriated unto true believers. "This he spake of the Spirit, which they that *believed* in him should receive," John 7:39. And elsewhere : " And God which knoweth the heart, gave them witness," viz., that they believed, as appears from the former verse, " in giving unto them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us to omit other places. Again: "And my trial, which was in my flesh, ye despised not, neither abhorred: but ye received me as an angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus. What was then your felicity? For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them unto me," Gal. 4:14, 15. If our Saviour's words be true, " He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward," Matt. 10:41 : doubtless he that receiveth an apostle, not only in the name of an apostle, but as an angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus himself, shall receive a righteous man's reward, *i. e.* salvation; meaning, if he shall continue in the same mind, and frame of heart, unto the end, as we have formerly interpreted such promises of God, by express warrant from the Scriptures themselves. When he tells them that he is afraid of them, lest he should have bestowed on them labour in vain, chap. 4:11, his meaning, doubtless, is not that he was afraid they would lose or make shipwreck of an unsound, light, or hypocritical faith, (such losses, whether of our own or of our friends, are no matter of fear unto us,) but of such a faith, which persevered in would have saved them. And, to forbear other passages which might readily be produced upon the same account, when he speaks thus unto them, "Ye are abolished from Christ, whosoever are justified by the law," (*i. e.* depend upon the works of the law for your justification,) "ye are fallen from grace." And again, "Ye did run well, who hindered you that you should not obey the truth ?" Gal. 5:4—7. He clearly supposeth that they had been true believers. If they were now fallen from grace, which the apostle clearly affirmeth they were, by depending upon the works of the law for their justification, it must needs follow that sometimes they were possessed of it and were the children of grace, which also their running well undeniably importeth. "Whereas therefore," saith Musculus upon the place, "he saith that the Galatians ran well, he commendeth their zeal and studiousness in the *true faith* and religion of Christ; signifying withal, that they might have attained or reached the



mark of true blessedness, had they persevered in that which they had well begun;" with more of like import. Let other orthodox expositors be consulted upon these latter, together with the former passages, mentioned by way of proof, that these Galatians were sometimes true and sound believers, and they will be found to carry the sense of them to the same point. On the other hand, several of the said passages, with some others, do as plainly and pregnantly suppose, that at the writing of the said epistle unto them they were wholly alienated from Christ, and had neither part nor fellowship in the great business of justification by him. They were removed from him that had called them into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. They were abolished from Christ, they were fallen from grace, they did not obey the truth. Calvin, upon the first of these expressions, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed," &c., writeth thus, "He convinceth them of a defection, not only from his doctrine, but from Christ himself; for men cannot hold Christ upon any other terms than by acknowledging, that by his benefit they are freed from the bondage of the law." Upon the second, "Ye are abolished from Christ," &c., thus, "The meaning is, if you seek for any part or piece of righteousness in the works of the law, Christ becomes nothing to you, and you are aliens from grace. For their opinion was not so gross, as that they thought they should be justified by the alone observation of the law; but they mingled *Christ* and the law together, otherwise *Paul* should have had no ground to terrify them with such threatenings as these. What do you mean? you take a course to make Christ unprofitable to you, you bring his grace to nothing. Thus then we see that we cannot place, no not the least part of our righteousness in the law, but we renounce *Christ* and his grace." Amongst several other passages looking the same way, Musculus upon the former of the last recited places commenteth in these words, "He had planted the Galatians, and watered them diligently by preaching the gospel of God unto them, and hoped that it would so have come to pass that they would have increased in the knowledge and *grace of Christ*. But whilst he thus hopeth and wisheth, they are transplanted or removed from him, in whom they had been planted." The truth is, that several expressions and carriages in the epistle are so pregnant on the one hand, to evince and prove that time was when they were true and sound believers ; and several others, as pregnant as they on the other hand, to prove them at the writing hereof to have been mere nullifidians,

or persons void of all true justifying faith, that expositors could not lightly but speak them sometimes true believers, whilst they had the former places before them, and afterwards, persons wholly lapsed from such faith, when they had the latter. The case concerning these Galatians being so evident, we shall argue it no further, but conclude with a brief report of M. Luther's judgment upon it. "At first," saith he, "the Galatians heard and obeyed the truth. Therefore, when Paul saith, 'Who hath bewitched you?' he signifieth, that now being bewitched by the false apostles, they had *fallen away* from and forsaken that truth which formerly they had obeyed." Not *long* after: "He had said before, that seeking justification by the law, they cast away the grace of God; and that Christ died for them in vain. Here he adds, that such persons crucify Christ, who had formerly lived and reigned in them. As if he should say, you have not only *cast away the grace of God*, it is not only true that Christ died for you in vain, but that he is most unworthily crucified in (by or amongst) you." Afterwards: "The righteousness of the law, which Paul here calls the flesh, is so far from justifying men, that they, who after they have received the Spirit, by the hearing of faith, make a defection unto it, are consummated by it, i. e. are made an end of and destroyed utterly." To conclude upon those words, chap. 5:4, "Ye are fallen from grace," i. e. saith he "ye are no longer in the kingdom of grace. He that falleth from grace, simply (and absolutely) loseth expiation (or atonement), remission of sins, righteousness, liberty, and that life, which Christ by his death and resurrection has merited for us." Many other passages of like import with these, might readily be cited from this author in his commentaries upon this epistle. So that there is little question to be made, hut that Luther abounded in this sense, viz., that persons truly justified, and in present possession of that righteousness, justification, life, which Christ merited for them, may yet fall away totally from this grace, and to destruction; and that he looked upon the Galatians, as Paul describes them in their different postures, first of faith, then of falling away, as perfect instances to evince the truth of such a doctrine.

I shall conclude the chapter in hand with a brief survey of that place, formerly mentioned, "For some are already turned aside after Satan," 1 Tim. 5:15. These words, Calvin, in his commentaries upon them, dilateth thus: "This expression, after Satan, is observable; because no man can turn aside from Christ, though it be never so little, but he follows Satan.

For he reigneth over all who are not Christ's. Hence we are admonished how destructive a thing it is to turn aside from a straight course, which *of the sons of God makes us slaves of the devil.*" So that his sense upon the place clearly is, that the persons here said to have turned aside after Satan, were before this their turning aside, the children of God, and therefore true believers; and that by means of their turning aside, and after it, they were the slaves of the devil; which implies a total defection, at least, from Christ and their faith. I desire the reader to take knowledge once more upon occasion of the passage now transcribed from Calvin, that he was not so absolute or entire in his judgment for an impossibility of a total declining in the saints, as the friends of this notion commonly presume, or as if he never expressed his judgment to the contrary. In the words lately cited, he expressly grants and supposeth, that of the children of God men may be made or become the slaves of Satan. And that the persons spoken of in the Scripture in hand, were, as he supposeth, true believers, is evident from hence, viz. that they are said to have turned aside, or to have been turned aside, after Satan. If they had been unsound or hypocritical Christians before, they could not, by falling into any other course of impiety, be said to have turned aside or out of the way after Satan; because men and women follow Satan as much, as directly, as close, by walking in ways of hypocrisy, and rottenness of profession, as in ways of uncleanness, or of any Other unrighteousness whatsoever. Therefore certainly the way, out of which they turned aside to walk after Satan, was the way of a true faith, and of a life answerable thereunto. And that a "turning aside after Satan," imports a total deserting of Christ, or a total deprivation and loss of that interest which a person had in Christ before, is richer in evidence than to need proof. Nor do I find any one expositor, who, casting up the expression, finds it to amount to any whit less.

## CHAPTER 15.

**Declaring the sense and judgment, as well of the ancient fathers of the church as of modern reformed divines, touching the point of perseverance; and so concluding the digression concerning this subject.**

IT is a vanity whereunto the tongues and pens of learned men, being once engaged and declared for an opinion, especially in matters of religion, are much subject unto, to cast undue aspersions upon, and so to create undeserved prejudice unto, all such doctrines or opinions which are inconsistent with that opinion which themselves are known to hold and to have maintained. Amongst other weapons of this warfare, the arrow of this reproach is most frequently unquivered, and let fly: if men can find that any opinion which hath the least semblance or sympathy, though but in sound of words only, with that which opposeth theirs, hath either been held by any former heretic, or person voted erroneous, or else opposed by those unto whose lot it is fallen to be surnamed orthodox, they make an importune outcry against this opinion, I mean which opposeth theirs, as if it were nothing but an old infamous error, held only by heretics and erroneous men, but stigmatised and cast out of the church by the orthodox long ago. The truth is, that neither the one consideration nor the other, no, not when they are real, and not in pretence or presumption only, I mean neither the asserting of an opinion by men in many things erroneous, nor the disowning of it by men in most things, and in the main, orthodox, are any demonstrative grounds of the unsoundness of this opinion, or that it is not from God. How much less when that opinion indeed, which suffers rebuke from men upon such terms, was neither taught nor held by the one, nor rejected or opposed by the other, but only an opinion in some outward lineaments somewhat like unto it, but in heart and substance of matter altogether differing from it? The doctrine of election or predestination unto life from foreseen faith, or works, is commonly decried and made odious unto men upon this pretence, that it was a doctrine held by Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, and condemned and cast out of the church for an error by all the orthodox fathers long since. Whereas it is evident from the records of antiquity, that the opinion concerning predestination from foreseen faith or works,

which was held by the Pelagians, and rejected by the orthodox fathers, was not simply this, that God predestinated those unto life whom he foresaw would believe or live holily, but whom he foresaw would believe, or live holily, out of the strength or abilities of nature. The orthodox fathers themselves held and taught predestination from foreseen faith and holiness, as well as the Pelagians, but with this difference: The fathers taught it, from the foresight of such a faith and holiness which men should be enabled unto by grace; the Pelagians, from such, whether faith or holiness, which men should raise or exhibit by the strength of nature. This is evident from what Gerardus Vossius, a diligent and faithful surveyor of antiquity, demonstrateth in the sixth book of his Pelagian history. "The Greek fathers," saith he, "always, and all the Latin fathers who lived before Austin, are wont to say, that they are predestinated unto life whom God foresaw would live godlily and well; or, as some others speak, whom he foresaw would believe and persevere, who should believe on him to eternal life, 1 Tim. 1:16. Which they so interpret as to say, that predestination unto glory is made (by God) according to his foreknowledge of faith and perseverance. But they did not mean the foresight or foreknowledge of such things which a man was to do by the abilities of nature, but by the strength and assistance of grace, as well preventing as subsequent. So that this consent of antiquity no ways helpeth either the Pelagians or semi-Pelagians (in their cause.) For both these held, that the cause of predestination is assignable on man's part, according to all the effects of it; whereas the orthodox fathers acknowledge, that the first (or preventing) grace is conferred, not of merit, but freely. So that their opinion was, that there was no cause assignable on man's part of predestination unto preventing grace," &c. This to have been, the true and clear difference between the ancient orthodox fathers and the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians touching the point of predestination, he sheweth with a high hand of evidence and proof from several passages cited out of the authors themselves in the prosecution and proof of his said thesis.

As the doctrine of predestination from foreseen faith and perseverance, as it is at this day held and taught by some, (which yet is none of my sense or opinion, as I may have occasion, I conceive, more particularly to declare in the progress of the work in hand,) is unjustly traduced, as if it savoured of Pelagianism, and had been long since

thrown out of the church by all orthodox antiquity, whereas it was the express doctrine, as we have heard, generally held and taught by them; so is the doctrine of conditional perseverance, and which asserteth an amissibility of grace and true faith, both total and final, most unduly and unworthily branded with this reproach, that it is a rotten Popish error, and was never held by orthodox men. We shall, therefore, in the former part of this chapter, wipe off this aspersion, and prove by express testimonies, and these not a few, that this doctrine was a branch of the faith of the primitive Christians, and of those who were, and are at this day, esteemed to have been the most orthodox and sound in their generation. Some testimonies of this import we have already, as I remember, cited upon other occasions in the preceding part of this discourse; and to save transcriptions as much as with convenience may be, we shall not repeat the words of any author which have been already expressed, but only give the sense of the said words in English, and for the words themselves, send you to those quarters of the discourse where they are lodged, and easy to be found. We shall do the like in the latter part of this chapter, in respect of such testimonies from modern writers, which have been already presented in the express words of their respective authors upon another account.

In the first place I shall account unto the reader what the fore-mentioned author, Gerard Vossius, delivers, in his said Pelagian History, for the sense and judgment of orthodox antiquity in the present question about perseverance: "From this additament of Austin's opinion," saith he, speaking of what this father had added to the common doctrine of those who had gone before him, touching perseverance, which he had expressed in his former thesis, "it is manifest enough that both Austin and Prosper, and Pelagius, with his followers, agreed in this, that justifying faith and regenerating grace may be lost, and that they are lost by very many." A little after: "Therefore they understand not the doctrine or judgment of antiquity who, when they read in Augustin and others that the elect of God either never fall away, or else that they return to God before they die, from hence infer that their opinion was, that true believers either always persevere in faith, or at least never fall away utterly from the grace of God. Whose arguing leans upon this supposition, that true believers and the elect are terms convertible; whereas, according to Augustin's doctrine, not true believers, but true

believers persevering, and elect, are reciprocable. Yea, the whole dispute which Augustin had with Pelagius and the Massilienses, about the perseverance of the saints, stands upon a contrary hypothesis. For unless it be granted, that some true believers and godly ones do depart (from God,) and not return, do fall, and not rise again, this question, why some of these persevere, others not, is at an end before it begin; and yet this was the question so hotly disputed between Augustin and his adversaries. Yea, the truth is, that all antiquity jointly opposeth that indefectibility (of the saints, which some defend.) Nor is there any of the ancients to be found who, as far as I am able to call to mind, conceiveth that believers have any absolute certainty of their perseverance. They indeed acknowledge that the minds of the children of God ought not to be tortured with any anxiety of doubting, inasmuch as they have a confidence of hope, which may sustain and keep up with sufficient comfort those that may fall, and relieve those that are already fallen. But yet they deny that any man, because he certainly knows that he is at present in the number of true believers, can therefore promise unto himself, upon any certainty, such or so much favour from God for the remaining part of his life, that he may be as bold as if he had it by revelation from God, that he shall never incur the guilt of adultery, murder, idolatry, though David, Solomon, and others, declined so fearfully from the ways of God as they did; or, in case he shall fall into such horrible sins with them, that he also shall have the time of his life prolonged as David had, until, upon his serious repentance, he be reconciled unto God. Such an absolute certainty as this they affirm to be inexpedient in this life, being obnoxious to so many temptations, and where the weakness of men is such that, unless there be a continual solicitousness and care to keep that grace which we have once received, a carnal security will most easily steal upon us, through which, as by a broad gate wide opened, whole troops of vices are like to convey themselves into us.”

Thus far Vossius, who in the words mentioned comprehendeth the clear and unquestionable sense of the primitive faith, and of the most orthodox fathers, for several hundreds of years next after Christ and the apostles, concerning the point of perseverance; and therefore subjoineth in the entrance of his demonstration of the said thesis words to this effect: "That the sense and opinion expressed (touching the perseverance of believers) was the common opinion of antiquity, they only at this day can deny who, though in other matters they may possibly be men learned enough, yet are altogether strangers in antiquity, or else have their minds and judgments so mancipated (or enslaved) to the opinions of this man or that, that they choose rather to see with their eyes than their own, and prefer a going astray with them, before walking in ways of truth with other men." And whereas some pretend, that when the fathers say that grace or faith may be lost, they speak not of true grace, or of true faith, but of that which is feigned, the said author, in the process of his discourse, resolves this pretence into smoke, and evidently proves the doctrine of the fathers to have been, that even true faith, and that which justifieth, and makes men at present true children of God, and which in the nature of it is saving, may be utterly and for ever lost. And whereas some passages are found in their writings, wherein they say that true faith may indeed be lost, but is always recovered again before death; and in some others that faith cannot be lost; to this he clearly answereth, by that distinction of three several degrees of faith, which they still suppose, affirming, that in passages of the former import, they speak only of faith of the second degree, *i. e.* of such faith which is not only justifying and saving, in respect of the nature of it, but which actually saveth ; and in places of the latter import, that they speak only of faith of the third and highest degree, *i. e.* of a perfect, solid, rooted, and grounded faith. For the reader's better satisfaction, I shall exhibit unto him the author's own words at large. " This, nevertheless, is to be taken into special consideration, that when the fathers affirm that faith may be lost, and therefore that eternal election cannot rightly be inferred from faith, they do not all speak of any measure or degree of faith whatsoever, since many of them distinguish three several degrees of faith. The first of which gives essence, or truth of being unto faith, in respect whereof it justifieth, and is called a lively faith: opposite hereunto is a dead and putatitious," *i. e.*



an imaginary “faith, which is proper to hypocrites. The next degree adds duration,” or perseverance, “in respect whereof it saveth,’ *i. e.* becomes actually saving: “opposite to this faith is that which we commonly call temporary, (attributing that improperly unto men’s faith, which the Scripture attributes to men themselves,) which is the faith of apostates. The third,” and last “degree, superaddeth solidity: this faith is termed perfect, solid, rooted, which any time of a man’s life gives him assurance; *i. e.* to use the words of Gregory the Great, doth so confirm,” or strengthen, “that a man. cannot fall afterwards, and knoweth this most certainly of himself. To this degree of faith a weak faith is opposed, which is the faith of many of the elect. Those passages of the fathers, wherein they say that true faith may be lost, but is always recovered again, always speak of the second degree of faith. But those, where they say that such faith cannot be lost, must necessarily be understood of the third and highest degree of faith. Between which expressions, and what they generally, teach otherwise, viz. that many perish eternally, through a falling away from their faith, there is no repugnance. For in such assertions as this, they understand faith of the first degree, *i. e.* such a faith which is formally and essentially true, or, which is the same, which is justifying, though not” actually or in the event “saving, but justifying in the essence or substance of it, in respect whereof a man is at present righteous or just; not justifying in respect of continuance; since if we consider the truth of the end, that faith is not truly justifying, which at any time ceaseth to justify : because no other faith hath the promise of eternal life, but only that which persevereth.”

By the express tenor of these things, it fully appears, that the uniform and constant opinion of all orthodox antiquity was, that true faith, true grace, true justification, and forgiveness of sins, may, by security, carelessness, ungodliness, and profaneness of life and conversation, be totally and finally lost, and the persons ill whom they were sometimes found, eternally perish. As for that which some of them teach, concerning the inamissibility or infallible perseverance of such a faith, which is perfected and radicated in the soul so thoroughly, and to such a degree, as we have heard expressed, were it granted that they speak of a simple and absolute inamissibility in this kind, and that their meaning is, that there is an utter impossibility, and not a great difficulty or improbability only, that such a faith should miscarry, or no instance producible to prove

that such a faith ever did miscarry, it no ways rebuketh the confidence of that assertion, which we have in this present chapter, and elsewhere in the discourse formerly avouched; viz. that a possibility of the falling away of true saints, and true believers, and that both totally and finally, was the general and joint doctrine of the primitive Christians for several ages together after Christ. The consideration whereof is abundantly sufficient to stop the mouth of that undue pretext, which presumeth to say, and that with confidence, that the best and most conscientious men were always of this judgment, that true grace is imperishable, and true believers under no possibility of miscarrying finally. But of this we spake more at large in the ninth chapter. I here only add: That when any of the ancient fathers or councils express themselves in words of any such import as this, that there is or may be a faith so raised, rooted, or strongly built that it cannot either totally or finally miscarry, it is no ways probable that their meaning should be, that there is an utter, simple, or logical impossibility, that such a faith should be wholly lost, but that they rather speak rhetorically, and would be understood of a kind of moral impossibility only, which imports a great difficulty, improbability, or rareness of an event: in which sense or notion the Scriptures themselves, (as knowledge hath been given elsewhere,) are wont to term things impossible, or such which cannot be.

Lest any man should be jealous, either of the sufficiency of the author, from whom we have taken the survey of the judgment of antiquity in the question in hand, to make a true and perfect account of such a business, or of his sincerity in giving it in, let antiquity herself speak, and plead her own cause with her own lips. And first we shall give you a brief taste of the sense of some of the best authors, who lived and wrote before Pelagius was heard of in the world: and then of such who lived with him and after him. “But because,” saith Irenaeus, who lived about the 172nd year after Christ, “all men are of the same nature,” or kind, “having power as well to hold,” or keep, “as to work,” or do, “that which is good, and power again *to lose it*, and *not to do it*, some are justly, even with understanding men, how much more with God commended, and receive a worthy testimony of a good election,” or choice, “and of a continuance therein: others again are accused,” or condemned, “and receive a just” retribution in “damage, because *they rejected*,” or put away from them, “that which is just and good, This author clearly supposeth, that all men

have power by nature, (he means, as is easily collected from other places in his writings, by nature, as it is generally recruited, or relieved and strengthened, by the grace of God in Christ,) both to retain and work that which is good, perseveringly, and again to throw it off and recede from it, yea, so as finally to perish in such their declinings.

Tertullian, who wrote about the year 195, declareth his judgment in the point to this effect: "Whatever it be that my mean abilities have attempted in reference to an entering upon and holding out in a course of repentance, doth indeed concern all those that have addicted themselves unto the Lord as persons who all seek after safety," or salvation, "by pleasing God; but it concerns those more nearly who are yet novices, and beginning very diligently to water their ears with the words of God, like young whelps whose sight is not yet perfectly come to them, move up and down at uncertainty, and profess," or learn, "indeed to renounce their old ways, and take up repentance, but neglect to inclose it *i. e.* to guard or fence it with resolution and care, that it may not be laid waste by the return and breaking in of the lusts of their former ignorance upon them. Not long after, thus: "Some are of opinion as if God must of necessity give that which he hath promised, even to those that are unworthy, and thus make his bounty a servitude or bondage" unto him. "But if he gratifieth us" with or by "the symbol of death," meaning, if he confers upon us forgiveness of sins, in or upon our being baptized, wherein we typically die with Christ, "out of necessity, he doth it against his will. And who will suffer that to continue or remain firm which he giveth unwillingly? For, *do not many afterwards fall away? Is not this gift taken away from, many?*" He clearly speaks of the gift of justification or remission of sins, which the ancient fathers more generally held and taught was conferred in baptism, at least where there was any meetness in the person baptized. But whether this be orthodox or no, evident it is, from the words recited, that Tertullian's judgment was, that many may, yea, and do, fall away, and suffer the deprivation and loss of the grace of justification, according to what we reasoned at large, Chap, 8., and consequently of regeneration also.

Gregory Nazianzen, famous in the Christian church about the year 875, expresseth the received doctrine in his times, concerning the subject in debate, in such passages as these: "Take heed thou keepest thy cleanness, lest otherwise thou beest sick again of thy flux of blood, and shalt not be

able to take hold on Christ, so as to steal,” or secretly obtain, “a cure from him.” A little after: “Take heed, lest, by committing sin, thou liest again in thy bed, I mean, in the evil and pestilential ease” or quiet “of a body broken and dissolved with pleasures. But go thy ways as thou art, and remember this saying, ‘Behold, thou art made whole; now sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee,’ in case thou shalt be found wicked after” such “a benefit received. Thou hast heard this great voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth,’ whilst yet thou layest in the grave, (for what is more vocal or audible than the word,) and art come forth, after thou hadst been dead, not four days only, but many more, returning unto life with him that lay three days in the grave, and having thy grave-clothes,” or death-bands, “loosed. Take heed lest thou diest again, and beest gathered unto those who dwell in the graves, and beest the second time bound with the cords of thy sins: for it is uncertain whether thou shalt be raised up again unto life, or no.” And yet again, some few passages interjected: “Only be careful, and look to this, that having with the purity” of thy heart and ways “kindled a fire of envy in the devil’s breast” against thee, “thou makest not thyself miserable again by sinning.” The comport of those passages with the doctrine of a possibility both of a total and final declining in the saints, is so express and full, that it needs no light of argument to become visible.

Chrysostom, a principal pillar, amongst those made of flesh and blood, of the Christian church, about the year 382, speaketh plainly and without parable the same things with the former, and that frequently. We formerly cited words from him which made this English sound: “Although the graces and gifts of God are without repentance, yet malice,” or wickedness, “prevailed so far as to. dissolve this law. What then is there of more grievous consequence than to remember injuries, which appears to be a subverter” and destroyer “of so great a gift of God, meaning, justification or remission of sins. This father, in his seventh and eighth sermons or orations, inscribed “ Unto Theodorus fallen from a virtuous life,” supposeth this as the basis or ground-work of the greatest part of these buildings, viz. that he that is, or hath been, a worthy saint and true believer, may apostatise, and that to perdition; therefore, both totally and finally. Yea, the manner of the carriage of these orations, clearly import this to have been an unquestionable doctrine amongst Christians in those times. I shall only transcribe a passage or two towards

the beginning of the latter of them, where the author, apologizing for the redundancy of his most passionate sorrow over his late Christian friend, Theodorus, who had grievously fallen, and was not yet risen again, and pleading that he had more cause to wish Jeremy's wish, Jer. 9:1, than the prophet himself had, he expresseth himself thus: "For if one man who doth the will of the Lord be better than a thousand wicked ones, verily thou also wert better than myriads" or millions "of Jews. So that no man hath any reason to complain of me, if I have written more lamentations than that prophet, or have expressed more grievous pangs of sorrow than he. For I do not bewail the overthrow of a city, or the captivity of ungodly men, but the desolation of a sacred soul, the destruction, utter defacement and demolition of a temple wherein Christ dwelt. For he that had thoroughly known that furniture" or world "of thy mind, which now the devil hath burnt" and consumed, "whilst it yet shined" in its glory, "he would not have sorrowed reading the prophet's lamentations, and hearing that barbarous hands had defiled the holy of holies, and burnt all with fire, cherubims, ark, mercy-seat, tables of stone, golden candlestick, manna: for the calamity which is fallen upon thee is so much more bitter and grievous than that, by how much more precious the sacred things are which were reposed in thy soul. This was a more holy temple than that; for this did not shine with gold and silver but with the grace of the Holy Ghost; and instead of cherubims and ark, had Christ, and his Father, and the Paraclete," or Comforter, "placed therein. But now it hath them not, but is desolate, and despoiled of all that beauty and comeliness, dismantled of those divine and inexpressible ornaments, and is become destitute of all means of safety or keeping. There is neither door nor bar to it, but it standeth open to all vile and soul-destroying thoughts."

We need no commentary upon this text to discover the author's mind in it in reference to what is claimed from it: for he doth not only clearly hold forth herein his judgment in these things touching the possibility of such a defection in the best of saints which is accompanied with destruction, but avoucheth a hypothesis or particular instance also, which proveth somewhat more than such a possibility, I mean, the act itself.

He that will please to read and consider what the same father likewise homilied upon John 1:12, may have yet a further sight of his judgment in the case. Here he demands, "Why the evangelist doth not say that he made them the sons of God, but that he gave them power to be made the

sons of God ?” giving this answer, that by this expression “he showed that it requires much diligence and labour to keep that image” or character “of adoption,” or sonship, “which is formed in baptism unspotted and uncorrupted unto the end; signifying withal, that none shall be able to deprive us of this power, unless we ourselves first shall deprive ourselves of it: ” which last words clearly suppose that men may deprive themselves of such a power, which God hath invested them with for the making themselves his sons, *i. e.* for the maintaining of themselves in this blessed relation unto the end. Concerning Judas, his opinion was, as is evident from several passages in his works, that he sometimes was the child of grace, a holy and good man. In the very beginning of his 52nd oration, extant in the fifth tome of his works, and intituled, “That he that stands ought not to be confident unto the end, nor he that is fallen to cast away hope,” he hath these words: “Judas, my beloved, was at first a child of the kingdom, when he heard it” said to him, “with the disciples, You shall sit upon twelve thrones ; but at last he became a child of hell.” You shall find him self-consistent in this opinion, in his 64th homily, upon Matt. chap. 19:28, and also in his 67th oration or sermon concerning repentance, in the sixth tome his works.

A few lines after the pre-recited words concerning Judas, he subjoineth these: “For many, who having ascended the top” or height “of heaven,” *i. e.* of heavenly perfection, “and shown all manner of abstinence, and chosen wildernesses to live in, “and never so much as dreamed of a woman, by yielding a little unto slothfulness” or ease, “they were supplanted” and overthrown, “and came to the very gulf or bottom of all wickedness.” It were easy to weary the reader, if it be not done already, with citations from this most renowned writer, wherein he declares with a high hand for that doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints’ declining, and that unto death, both first and second; yea, and that upon such terms, that no man that shall impartially consider the manner how he expresseth himself in passages of this nature, but will conceive that this was the general doctrine of the Christian churches, and of the soundest teachers in those days.

Origen, who lived long before Chrysostom, viz. a little after the year 200, plainly enough delivers the said doctrine. “But if,” saith he, “a satiety” or wearisomeness “overtaketh any of those who have stood in an eminent and perfect degree” of Christianity, “I do not conceive that such a

one becomes a bankrupt” in grace, “or falls to nothing on a sudden, but that he must needs waste” or consume “by little and little, and by steps and degrees; so that it may sometimes come to pass, that if some short relapse” or fall “happeneth, and he speedily repenteth and cometh again to himself, that he doth not utterly ruin himself, hut recovereth his foot and returns to his” former “state, and may repair that which through negligence is fallen down.” He that speaketh such things as these, clearly supposeth that Christians and saints of the best and highest standing, may very possibly so fall as to ruin themselves utterly ; yea, the passage importeth, that when such do begin to decline or fall, it is somewhat a rare case if ever they do recover or rise again. It is only the possibility, not probability, of this that is here asserted. That Ambrose, who was contemporary with Augustin, though somewhat his senior in years, was of the same judgment with the forementioned authors in the doctrine of perseverance, may be sufficiently gathered from that interpretation of his, formerly cited from Musculus, of those words of Paul, “Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” The reader may please to satisfy himself herein only by looking back to Chap. 13., page 434, of this present discourse. This father elsewhere saith: “God therefore foreknowing that they would be persons” evilly disposed or “of bad wills, did not account them in the number of good men, although our Saviour saith to those seventy-two disciples, whom he chose in the second rank, who afterwards went hack from him, ‘Your names are written in heaven.’ But this was for” their “righteousness’ sake; for it is meet that every man should have as he deserveth. For because they were good, they were chosen to the ministry, and their names were written in heaven for” their “righteousness’ sake, as I said, but according to the prescience” of God “they were in the number of evil men. There is no acceptance of persons in the prescience of God; for prescience is that wherein it is definitely known unto him of what kind every man’s will, wherein he will persevere, will be by or for which he will either be damned or crowned. To conclude, they who God knows will persevere in good, are oftentimes before evil; and they who he knows will continue evil” unto their end “are sometimes good before. So that there is no cause for any man to complain, inasmuch as God is no acceptor of persons. For both Saul and Judas Iscariot were” at first or “before good, the Scripture saying of Saul, that he was a good man, and that there was not abetter

among the sons of Israel,” so the vulgar Latin readeth, 1 Sam. 9:2. “And the apostle Peter saith of Iscariot, He obtained fellowship in this ministration, with signs and wonders.” In another place he saith: “Sometimes they are at first good, who afterwards become and continue evil; in which respect they are both said to be written in the book of life, and again to be blotted out of it.” Therefore neither was this father any patron of the doctrine of perseverance, as it is patronised by many at this day.

Cyprian, who lived about the year 250, writing upon the Lord’s prayer, hath words to this effect: “And the servant, who having his whole debt forgiven him by his lord, would not forgive his fellow-servant, is cast into prison. Because he would not show favour to his fellow-servant, he *lost that favour*, which his lord had showed unto him.” By the favour which this servant lost, after it had been vouchsafed unto him by his lord, he clearly means the pardon of his sins. Therefore justification, or pardon of sin, may, according to the doctrine of this father, be lost, yea, so lost as never to be found again. The same author elsewhere saith, that “Solomon, and Saul, and many others,” had power, “were able to retain the grace that had been given them, whilst they walked in the ways of the Lord; but when the” instruction or “discipline of God departed” from them, “his grace departed also. Therefore it stands us in hand to hold out in the strait and narrow way of praise and glory,” &c. Yet again : “The very same spiritual grace, which in baptism is equally received by those that believe, is afterwards in our conversation and acting, either diminished or increased; as in the gospel, the seed whereof our Saviour speaketh, is equally sown, but according to the diversity of the ground, part of it is consumed,” or comes to nothing, “another part of it bringeth forth fruit in abundance, yet in a different proportion, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold.” A little after: “Ofttimes it comes to pass that some of those who are” spiritually “sound, when baptized, if afterwards they fall to sin, are shaken with the unclean spirit returning unto them; so that manifest it is, that the devil is by the faith of the believer, excluded in baptism, and that, in case this faith of his afterwards fails, be returneth.”

Chromatius, who, according to some writers, had his time of mortality allotted unto him about the year 350, though others bring it down much lower, having upon those words, Matt. 6:12 : “And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” affirmed, that “unless we forgive our debtors, we



make ourselves guilty” of eternal death “before God with our own words,” subjoineth, a little after, thus: “This the Lord himself elsewhere doth most plainly make manifest, producing the example of the servant who had been a debtor, to whom, though he owed much, yet upon his entreaty, his lord, forgave him the whole. This servant, after his debt had been freely remitted unto him, denying the like “favour” in a smaller matter “to his fellow-servant, was cast into prison, and condemned to punishment.”

Macarius, who lived about the year 370, is a diligent and frequent assertor of the doctrine maintained in our present digression in his writings. “After the same manner,” saith he, “the Spirit admonished! the soul, which by grace knoweth God, and is purified from her former sins, and is endowed with the ornaments of the Holy Ghost, and hath tasted the divine and heavenly meat,” or nourishment; “yet because she doth not walk in this knowledge with that diligence which is meet, nor preserveth that good affection and love which she oweth to her heavenly husband, Christ, as becometh her, she *is cast off and driven away from, that life of which she did partake*” Not long after : “Wherefore we must strive, and take heed with the greatest wisdom, that we work out our salvation with fear, as it is written. Whosoever therefore of you are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, see that in nothing, neither small nor great, you behave yourselves carelessly, nor reproach the Spirit of grace, *lest you be banished from that life which you have now obtained.*” Yet again, a little after: “ But when the soul hath obtained grace, now is there need of much understanding and perspicacity” in discerning, “which things themselves God also gives unto the soul asking them of him, that so this soul may serve him in that Spirit which she hath received with all acceptation, and in nothing be overcome of evil, or deceived through ignorance, turning aside through rashness and sloth, and falling to do all things besides,” or contrary unto “ the comely” order “of the Divine will. For *punishment, death, and mourning abide such a soul*; which” in effect “the divine apostle himself also saith, ‘Lest when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway.’ You see after what manner,” or at how great a rate, “he feared, notwithstanding he was an apostle of God.” The same father, in the same place, speaketh words to this effect: “ For man is of that nature,” or frame, “that though he be fallen into a deep gulf of vice, and is become the servant of sin, yet he maybe converted” or turned “to that which is good; and, on the contrary, being the bond-man of the Holy

Ghost, and overcome with the drunkenness of” spiritual and “heavenly things, he may be turned back to that which is evil.” No man, considering these things, can lightly imagine but that this devout and learned father, who carrieth blessedness in his name, held dogmatically, and upon mature consultation had with the best of his understanding in the mystery of Christ, a possibility that even the best and highest-raised saints may, through sloth and negligence, lose this standing, fall away, and perish.

Basil, surnamed the Great, who lived much about the same time with the last-mentioned author, assigning the differences between the condition of the saints in this present world and that which is to come, asserteth this for one. That “in this life the danger of falling is great; upon which account Paul said, ‘Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall but there,’ meaning, in the future state of glory, “ their steps are firm,” or fixed, “life is unchangeable; there is no more danger of being carried away unto sin. For neither is here any rebellion” or insurrection “of the flesh,” &c. Not long after: “Therefore we men die often before the body cometh by death to be unyoked” or loosed “from the soul.—So that the life of men is made,” or naturally apt “to be accomplished” or fulfilled, “not only with a change, in respect of one age succeeding another, but with falls” or ruins “of their souls through sin.”

The same father in another place speaks yet more plainly to the business in hand. “Many,” saith he, “who had gathered much together from their youth, when they come to the middle of their years, temptations from evil spirits rising up against them, and assaulting them, have not been able to bear the” stress, or “burden of the winter, for want of a good pilot-ship, and so *have lost all*. And hence it cometh to pass that *some have made shipwreck of faith*; others, by means of a violent tempest, as it were, of pleasure rushing upon them, have utterly lost that chastity which they had preserved together from their youth. A most sad spectacle l for a man after fasting, after austereness of living, after much praying, after much, weeping, after a continent life, it may be for twenty or thirty years together, through negligence and carelessness of soul, to be found naked” or destitute “of all; and that such a person who hath greatly prospered” and thriven “by the” trade or “work of the commandments” of God, “should become like unto a merchant of a great estate, who, whilst his ship sailed on her course with a fair and

prosperous wind, judged himself a brave man for the abundance of goods in her, but, having passed through tempestuous seas, his vessel comes to be wrecked in the very haven, and he pointed at or shown by men as one that on the sudden, and at once, hath lost all” that abundance which he lately had.

The same father, in another of his sermons, expresseth his sense in the matter yet before us, in words of this import: “But sin is the destroyer of that grace which is given us by the laver of regeneration.” And soon after, allegorizing our Saviour’s parabolical history of the man who, going from Jerusalem towards Jericho, fell among thieves, thus: “But now stripes go before stripping,” or taking off his raiment, “that thou mayest learn” and know “that sin goeth before the laying aside” or loss “of that grace” or gracious benefit “which is given unto thee by that love” or kindness “which the Lord beareth unto men.” Once more, in another homily, this great doctor of the Christian church in his days, owneth the doctrine we now contend for in words to this purpose: “Thou seest them,” speaking of the Galatians, “having the Spirit; thou hast” also “heard, ‘Ye are abolished from Christ,’ and again, ‘Ye are fallen from grace.’ What doth he subjoin after all this, making room” or granting place “for their renewing? ‘My little children, of whom I travail in birth again: “He had once begotten them before; “but he that had once begotten them refuseth not to beget them the second time unto salvation.”

All the authors hitherto consulted about the sense of antiquity, and of the primitive Christians, concerning the possibility or nonpossibility of the saints relapsing unto death, had served their generations respectively, and were gone off the stage of mortality, before Pelagius was entered to act his part hereon, or at least had not much to do with him. We now come to inquire what their judgment and sense in the same points were, who either synchronized with Pelagius, and skirmished him, or else took their turns of mortality after him. Concerning the former of these, that star of the first magnitude in the Christian firmament, Augustin I mean, is, I suppose, in every man’s estimate, *instar omnium*, a man that will perform the service alone as sufficiently as if he had twenty more with him to assist him. Questionless, no man was better versed in the affairs of Christianity, or better understood what doctrines or opinions ruled in the Christian world, or dissented less from the common and generally received tenets of the church than he. Now to how great a degree he

abounded in that faith, which believeth a possibility of the saints' declining, and that unto death, cannot lightly be unknown to those that are, though but competently, acquainted with his writings. I shall present the reader with a first-fruits only, and leave the harvest for his own gathering. "It is," saith he, "much to be admired, and admired again, that God, to some of his children, whom he hath regenerated in Christ, and to whom he hath given faith, hope, and love, should *not give perseverance*; when as he forgives such great sins unto strange children, and by imparting his grace unto them, makes them children of his own." A little after: "For of such we dispute, who want perseverance in goodness, and go out of the world by death, with the *goodness of their wills fallen from good to evil*. Let these men answer, if they can, why God did not take away such men from the dangers of life, whilst they yet *lived faithfully and religiously*, that so sin and *wickedness* might not have *changed their minds* or understandings." That God doth not give perseverance, in such a sense as this father meaneth, viz. actual perseverance, and such which is accompanied with salvation unto some his children, whom he hath regenerated in Christ, &c. I readily and fully consent: but that he doth not give perseverance unto some, as much as he giveth unto any others of them whose deportment is but the same, I cannot believe, without believing him to be a respecter or acceptor of persons, which I must at no hand believe. Therefore, to me it is no more (scarce so much) a wonder, why God should give perseverance unto some of his children, and not unto others, than it is why he should save those that believe and not others. However, from both the testimonies cited, it is as evident as words could well make it, that the author's sense was, that truly regenerate men and believers may very possibly fall away, both totally and finally. Elsewhere he expresseth the same sense thus: "But if he that is now *regenerate and justified*, voluntarily relapseth into an evil course of life, surely he cannot say, I have not received it, because he hath now lost *the grace of God received* in, or by, his will being free unto evil." A little after: "Nor let it trouble us, *that God doth not give this perseverance unto some of his children*: for these, whilst they live religiously, are called the sons of God: but inasmuch as they will live wickedly afterwards, and die in this wickedness, the foreknowledge of God calleth them not the sons of God." So again, speaking of those who, as John saith, went out from them, but were not of them, "They were in a good way, but because they continued

not herein, *i. e.* persevered not unto the end, they were not, saith John, of us, when they were with us ; that is, they were not in the number of children, whilst *they were in the faith of children*: because they who are truly and indeed children, are foreknown and predestinated,” &c. From this passage it is evident, that however Augustin might seem to hold a personal election of some, somewhat after the same manner wherein it is commonly held and taught amongst us at this day, (though elsewhere he seems as much to contradict it, as we shall, God willing, show in due time,) yet he did not judge faith to be a fruit of such election, nor elect and true believers, to be voces convertibiles, but that there were many such believers, who did not appertain to the number of such elect ones, and, consequently, who might and should fall away finally. Again, not long after: “For this cause the apostle, when he had said, ‘We know that all things Work together for good to those that love God,’ knowing that some *love God, who do not persevere* in this good, presently adds, ‘to those who are called according to his purpose.’” From these three last passages compared together, it clearly appears in what sense such other passages in this author, wherein he asserts the certain perseverance of the saints, or the children of God, which Mr. Prynne, with others, cite from him, to persuade men that he was of their judgment in the point of perseverance, are to be understood, viz. as importing not the perseverance, much less the certainty of the perseverance of all that are true saints or true believers, (such a sense as this would make him the greatest self-contradictionist in the world,) but only of all those whom in the said passages now cited, he calls vere filii, sons indeed, or truly sons, and so, truly saints, *i. e.* (by his own interpretation) such as are elected, or predestinated by God to be conformable to the image of his Son. And besides, that by that perseverance, whereunto this author entitles even such elect children as these, he doth not mean any such continuance of the grace or faith, once or at any time received by them, which admitteth not of a total interruption or intercision by the way, but only a residence or presence hereof in them at the time of their death, might be abundantly proved from several explications which he makes of his mind in this behalf, if I judged it either of any great concernment to the cause, or satisfaction unto the reader. So that his judgment clearly was, that even those who he supposed could not fall away finally, might yet fall away totally. But concerning his judgment, touching such an election of

men as hath been mentioned as held by him, which was the occasion or ground of his opinion, that such could not fall away finally, or to perdition, we shall have opportunity in the latter part of this discourse to inquire, God sparing life, health, and liberty for the composure of it. In the meantime we have yet a further account of the judgment of this father touching the possibility of the total and final defection of many true believers in the citation following. “Many are called, and yet are not of those of whom it is said that few are chosen. Yet who can deny them to be elect” or chosen, “when as *they believe* and are baptized, *and live according unto God?* They are plainly termed elect, by those who are ignorant what they will prove afterwards, but not by him, who knoweth that they have not perseverance, which bringeth the elect to life eternal, and that they so stand that he foreknoweth they will fall. In this case, if the question be put to me, “Why God doth not give perseverance unto those to whom he hath given the grace of love, by which they live Christianly, I must answer, that I am ignorant.” If all this be not sufficient to satisfy the reader that this great and learned defender of the Christian faith, whose sense in the point in hand we are now inquiring after, was of the same judgment with us herein, let him feed further upon what yet remaineth.

Having asserted a beneficial necessity, even to the elect or predestinate ones themselves, to be kept in ignorance by God of their predestination or election in this life, he subjoins words of this import: “So then for the beneficialness of this secret, it is to be believed that some of the children of perdition, who receive not the gift of persevering unto the end, yet begin to live in such a *faith which worketh by love*, yea, and live for a time faithfully and justly, and afterwards fall away, nor are they taken away by death before this happeneth to them.” Doubtless there is no faith at all, either justifying or saving, but that which “worketh by love;” and yet we clearly see that Augustin’s opinion was that the “children of perdition,” *i. e.* such who perish eternally, are very capable of such a faith, and consequently may, yea, and some times do, fall away both totally and finally from it.

The same father, in another tract, discovereth his sense in the point queried in these words: “That of two, both being *godly*, perseverance unto the end should be given unto the one, and *not given unto the other*, belongs to the unsearchable judgments of God.” That in this sentence he

speaks of persons truly godly, and not seemingly only, besides the exigency of the passage itself to make the sense of it regular, as well that which goeth a little before as what followeth after maketh manifest. The words a little before are these: "For of Him they receive this" power, viz. of being made the sons of God, "who giveth pious cogitations to the heart of man, by which he cometh to have faith, which worketh by love." The words a little after, these: "To conclude, were they not both called, and *both followed him that called them?* Were they not *both* of sinners made righteous, or *justified*, and both *renewed by* the laver of *regeneration*?" Afterwards, in the same treatise, he cites with approbation the judgment of an orthodox man, of good repute in his days, to whom also he gives the testimony of learning and much acuteness, concerning the reason which moved Christ not to work those "mighty works" among the men of Tyre and Sidon which he wrought in Capernaum, although he knew that they would have believed, and repented upon the sight of them: "The Lord Christ," saith this author, as the father records his gloss, "foresaw that the men of Tyre and Sidon would afterwards have apostatised from their faith, in case they had been brought over to believe, by such miracles wrought amongst them; in which respect it was out of mercy that he forbore the working of them there, because they had been liable to a much greater punishment, in case they should have turned their backs upon the faith which they had once received, than if they had never received it."

In process of the same discourse, he hath words to this effect: That of regenerate men, some die persevering unto the end; others are detained in life until they fall away, who certainly had not fallen away in case they had died before they so fell; and again, that some, who thus fall, pass not out of this life until they return," or rise again, "who certainly should have perished had they died before their return." The possibility of a total falling away, without a final, and again, of both a total and final, cannot lightly be asserted in words more significant and express than these. The same father, in another part of his works, professeth his judgment to the same point thus: "For who dares deny hut that those first men were happy" or blessed "in paradise before they sinned, although they were uncertain how long this their blessedness should continue, or whether it would be eternal? But eternal it had been had they not sinned. And now, upon good grounds, we call those blessed whom we discern to live

righteously and religiously, with a hope of future immortality, without the perpetration of any such crime which wasteth the conscience, who easily obtain a merciful pardon from God for those sins of infirmity whereunto at present they are obnoxious; who, though they be certain of the reward of their perseverance, yet are found to be uncertain of their perseverance itself. For what man can certainly know that he shall persevere in the practice and proficiency of righteousness unto the end, unless by some revelation he be assured hereof by Him who, in his just and secret judgment, is not wont to inform all of such a thing, though he deceives none." That opinion of this father, which lieth large in these words, as in some other of the late-recited passages, and in twenty places besides of his writings, viz. that they who at present are true saints and believers, yea, and know this certainly, yet know not certainly whether they shall persevere or no unto the end, draweth along with it, by a pregnant and undeniable consequence, that opinion which all this while we avouch for his also, viz. that there is no impossibility at all but that believers may miscarry in point of perseverance, and "draw back," as the apostle speaketh, "to perdition." We shall, upon this account, at present add only one testimony more from his pen, unto which we are debtors for words to this effect, in his 107th Epistle: "Now believers pray even for themselves also, that they may persevere to be that which they have begun to be. For it is beneficial unto all, or well nigh unto all, that, for the sake of that most wholesome grace of humility, they should not be able to know how, or what manner of persons they may prove hereafter: to which point it is said, 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.' For the beneficialness of this fear lest, when we begin to walk regenerately and piously, we should through security become high-minded, some who will not persevere, are, either by the permission, or provision and disposition of *God*, mixed with those who will persevere; that we, by their falling away, being terrified, may with fear and trembling hold on the way of righteousness, until from this life, which is a temptation" or trial of us "on the earth, we shall pass unto another, where pride shall not need to be repressed, nor we have occasion to wrestle against the suggestions and motions of it." If there be place yet left for any man to doubt or question, whether Augustin taught the perseverance of true believers at any such a rate of absolute necessity, as it hath been of late commonly taught, and received amongst us, I shall only desire such a man, in order to his



thorough satisfaction in the point, to peruse what the forenamed Vossius hath written in the eleventh thesis or chapter of the sixth book of his Pelagian History ; where he shall find, besides several of the testimonies now cited, several others from this father of like consideration and import: together with some explications of and observations from them ; which, as far as the line of my understanding is able to stretch itself, make it a truth, parallel in evidence with the light of the noon-day, that that learned and judicious father we speak of was a thorough and professed enemy to that doctrine; I mean the doctrine of perseverance hitherto opposed in the digression in hand, All which considered, that saying of Mr. Prynne, viz., “That Augustin is so copious and full to the point,” he means in asserting the doctrine of absolute and ascertained perseverance, “that he wonders how any can be so impudent, shameless, and audacious, as to cite him to the contrary is, I will not say in his language an impudent, shameless and audacious saying, but such a saying, which as much ingenuity as a grain of mustard-seed would abhor. As for those quotations from this father by which he seeks to persuade the world into a conceit that he was as far out of the way of truth about the doctrine of perseverance as himself, there is not any one of them that gives any distinct sound that way. We have formerly, in this very chapter, shown you upon a clear account under the author’s own hand, how those and all like passages found in his writings, are to be understood, if we desire to understand them in his sense, and with a consistency to his judgment in other places.

He that desires information whether Prosper, Salvian, Gregory the Great, Isidor Hispalensis, and other the best writers after Augustin, that had occasion to declare their judgments in the point, together with councils and synods, were not of the same judgment with Augustin, may be gratified to satisfaction, by recourse had to the oft-mentioned author, Gerard. Joh. Vossius, in his *Historia Pelagiana*, lib. vi., thes. 12. The transcribing of more passages in this kind being already drawn together, and directed unto by another, and that in a book of no difficult procurement, will not, I suppose, be judged necessary, or much expedient to the business in hand, by a considerate reader.

How a doctrine of that sovereign import in Christian religion, of that pregnant assertion in the Scriptures themselves, so generally and constantly held forth and maintained by orthodox antiquity, as the

doctrine of a conditional perseverance hath in all these respects been clearly proved to be, should be, especially with so much heat and confident zeal, denied and opposed by a great party of the reformers of religion in these latter days, is of somewhat a strange, but of a much more sad consideration. But as it often happeneth in sweeping of houses, especially when they are full of dust or soil, that pieces of silver or gold, and other things of value, are either through negligence, or too much haste made in the work, by those that do it, or through a badness of their sight, swept up among the soil, and cast together with it upon the dunghill ; so may it very possibly fall out in great reformatations of religion, when corruptions and matters requiring reformation, whether in doctrine or maimers, are very numerous, and of a long gathering, that together with the corruptions, errors, and things necessary to be removed and abandoned, some things also of worth and good import, and which appertain to the purity and soundness of religion, are renounced, and cast out likewise, partly through too much zeal of an over-hasty dispatch in the work, partly through an injudiciousness in some things, in the principal reformers; partly through that infirmity of incogitancy, which is so importune an attendant upon flesh and blood, how vigilant soever. Or as it constantly falleth out in purgings and lettings of blood, that together with the bad humours and corrupt blood, somewhat of that which is good, and serviceable for the health and strength of the body, is parted with and lost; so is it hardly to be expected but that when an attempt shall be made to purge the body of Christian religion, being now encumbered and overgrown with errors, unsound notions and opinions having insinuated into the veins, and incorporated themselves, as it were, with the pure substance of it, which was the condition of it, by falling into the hands of, and remaining so long amongst, those demoniolatrical apostates, whose want of love to the truth, God avenged by sending them strong delusions which caused them to believe lies, somewhat of the soundness and native substance of it also should be divided from it, and cast into the draught together with that excrementitious and noisome matter, which is wrought out of it by the purge.

Notwithstanding, if we shall limit our discourse to the point in hand, and only speak of the doctrine of perseverance, the truth is, that a very considerable part of those who were interested in the reformation of religion about Luther's times, and who since maintain and carry on that

reformation, have not departed therein from the faith of primitive antiquity, as it hath been presented in the preceding part of this chapter: hut clearly teach and assert with them a possibility of the saints' declining even unto death. Concerning those of the reformed religion commonly distinguished by the name of Lutherans, who I suppose are equal in numbers, and not inferior in parts of learning, or in zeal towards the religion which they profess, unto those who are contra-distinguished by the name of Calvinists, it is sufficiently known, that they more generally, if not universally hold and teach, with Luther himself, whose judgment in the point was briefly touched, Chap. 14. page 477, no other perseverance of the saints or true believers, than that which possibly may miscarry both totally and finally. I shall not multiply quotations from their writings, but only lay before you some passages from Melancthon, who was Luther's companion and ally, together with two or three sayings from Chemnitius; and for the general sense of the Lutheran party of reformers, in the controversy in hand, refer you to the testimony and confession of a great defender of the common faith in the point of perseverance, who, I believe, was better acquainted with their writings, than any man that shall rise up to oppose him in his testimony.

"There are two errors," saith Melancthon, "of fanatic men, which must briefly be confuted, who conceit that men regenerate cannot lapse" or fall, "and that though they do fall, and this against the light of their conscience, yet they are righteous, or in a state of justification. "This madness is to be condemned, and both instances and sayings from the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles opposed to it. Saul and David pleased God, were righteous, had the Holy Ghost given unto them, yet afterwards fell, so that one of them perished utterly the other returned again unto God. There are many sayings" to the same point. And having cited, upon the said account, Matt. 12:43, 44; 2 Pet. 2:20, 21 ; 1 Cor. 10:12; Apoc. 2:5, he subjoineth, "These and the like sayings being spoken of regenerate men, testify they may fall; and that in case they fall against their consciences, they please not God unless they be converted." Elsewhere thus: " Whereas it hath been said that sins remain in the regenerate, it is necessary that a difference be made; for certain it is, that they who rush into sinful practices against conscience, do not continue in grace, nor retain faith, righteousness, or the Holy Ghost: neither can faith stand with an evil purpose of heart against conscience." A little after: "But

that they fall grace, and shed faith and the Holy Ghost, and become guilty of the wrath of God and of eternal punishment, who commit sin against conscience, many sayings” in the Scriptures “clearly testify;” to which purpose he cites Gal. 5:19; 1 Cor. 6:9, &c. Yet again: “Let us,” saith he, “mind the examples of Saul and David, who before their fall retained those benefits” or blessings “which I rehearsed, amongst which the discovery of God, the sending of his Son, the donation of his word and gospel, the donation of the Holy Ghost, the promise of life eternal, were reckoned; and after their fall, were not only divested of these good things, but felt also the” evils or “punishments which I mentioned, whereof these were some, the wrath of God, eternal punishments, the loss of their gifts,” &c. No more from this author at present, (from whom, notwithstanding much more of the same import might readily be cited,) but only that short saying of his, writing upon those words of the apostle, 1 Cor, 10:12, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,” — “But that in some who had the beginnings of faith, and afterwards *falling, return not*, that *faith* of theirs was *true before* it was *lost*” or shaken out, “the saying of Peter, 2 Pet. 2:20, testifieth.” So that there is little or no question to be made but that Melancthon was full of enmity in his judgment against the tenet of those who affirm an impossibility of the saints’ declining unto death.

Nor did Chemnitius, another learned and famous assertor of the Lutheran cause, dissent from him herein. “I answer,” saith he, having mentioned a Tridentine argument against assurance of salvation, pretended from the Scriptures, “that as well the Scripture as experience teacheth that many do not persevere, but fall from grace. But this cometh not to pass from hence, or because God is not willing to preserve” or keep “those to the end whom he hath once received into his grace” or favour, “but from hence, viz. because many shed” or spill “the Holy Ghost, and shake” or dash “faith out” of their hearts “by security, diffidence, and the works of the flesh.” Not long after, speaking of such Scripture passages as these, “Let him that standeth take heed that he fall not” Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,” &c. he saith, “There is a general answer to these sayings; for they are monitory unto men, lest through a persuasion of the certainty of salvation they degenerate into a carnal security, whereby faith itself is choked and quite put put; and that we should not indulge any corrupt affections, because by this means faith is

extinguished; and that, unless we abide in the goodness of God, we shall be cut off, Rom. 11:22. But concerning faith, it abideth not in those who without repentance indulge vicious” or depraved “affections.” The same author, elsewhere having recited very many texts of Scripture which speak of making shipwreck of faith, of denying the faith, of turning aside from the faith, &c., as 1 Tim. 1:19; 4:1, and 5:8, with several others, speaketh thus: “All these sentences speak of a true, living, and justifying faith, which they teach may be shaken out, cast away, and lost two several ways, as, either by sins against conscience, (for faith doth not remain in those who give way unto and indulge evil desires against conscience, 1 Tim. 1:2, and 5:6,) or else by admitting an error in the foundation, or by overthrowing the foundation of religion, 1 Tim. 4:6, and 2 Tim. 2:3.” It were easy to make the pile of testimonies from these authors yet far greater for the eviction of their sense in the question depending, but these produced are enough to satisfy ingenuity: and as for prejudice and partiality, the greatest abundance is not like to prove competent or sufficient.

That the main stream of Lutheran judgments run in the same channel with the opinions of those two great masters of this way already specified, is once and again acknowledged by Dr. Prideaux himself, (a man of opposite judgment in the present controversy,) who, as well in the doctrine of perseverance as in those other points of election, reprobation, the death of Christ, &c., coupleth the Lutherans with the remonstrants or Arminians from place to place. See upon this account his lectures *De Absoluto Decreto*, *De Gratia Universali*, *De Perseverantia Sanctorum*, &c. Therefore certainly the Protestant party of the Lutheran denomination are generally so far from magnifying the necessity or worth of that doctrine which asserteth that fatal perseverance of the saints hitherto opposed, so far from eulogizing and calling it either the fundamental article of the reformed religion, or one of the principal heads or points of doctrine wherein the Protestant or reformed churches have purged themselves from Popish errors, or the foundation of that assurance of salvation, without which that affiance which is requisite unto true faith, cannot stand, or a doctrine, which contains that promise of God in it, which all ministers are bound seriously to inculcate into their people for their comfort: the Lutherans, I say, are generally so far from deifying the said doctrine with such importune and senseless acclamations unto it as

these, wherewith notwithstanding the superstitious ignorance and weakness of some do their devotion to it, that they rather defy and abhor it as a dangerous and pernicious error, as a pillow of Satan's making, for the flesh to repose herself securely, even in her greatest licentiousness, and unruliness, upon, as a doctrine unworthy altogether the purity, holiness, wisdom, and impartial integrity of God.

Concerning those of the reformed religion, who make one shoulder with Calvin, to lift up the same body or frame of doctrine with him, though they ordinarily, or at least frequently, I mean the greater part of them, declare themselves against the Lutheran sense in the point of perseverance, yet is this doctrine, which they so frequently oppose, either of that sovereign authority over their judgments and consciences other while, or of that signal and indispensable necessity for the managing of several points in Christian religion, that ever and anon they assert it, and are necessitated to speak things of a perfect and clear consonancy with it. I neither have leisure nor opportunity of books, to make any full collection from their writings, of such passages, which, by the number of those sayings that I have observed upon this account, within a very small compass of reading, I presume are to be found therein; but shall give a brief account unto the reader, of what I have met with of this import, and observed, by some occasional inspections into their writings, now and then. I begin with the standard-bearer himself of this brigade, Mr. Calvin. "He commends them," saith he, speaking of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in respect of those to whom he writeth, "that they had begun well. But lest under a pretence of that *grace* which *they had obtained*, they should indulge a carnal security, he tells them they have need of perseverance. For many, having only tasted lightly of the gospel, do not so much as think of any proficiency, as if they were come to the highest pitch already. Thus it cometh to pass, that they do not only sit down in the midst of the race, yea, sometimes near to the very entrance of the race, but *turn* their course *quite another way*. This indeed is a very specious objection, When we have gotten Christ, what should we desire more? But if Christ be possessed by faith, we must persist in faith, that our possession in this kind may be perpetual. Therefore Christ hath given himself to be enjoyed by us, upon these terms, or by this law, that as we are admitted by faith to a participation of him, so we should by the same faith preserve and keep so great a good until death." The conditionality of

perseverance in the saints, yea, the non-perseverance of some of them, cannot lightly be asserted in terms more significant and express. To tell men that they must persist in faith, to make the possession of Christ perpetual unto them: and to inform them withal, that God will by an irresistible hand of power make, or constrain them to persist in faith, is to tie plummets of lead to a man's heels to make him run the faster. The same author elsewhere: "Now," saith he, "we see who they are, whom the apostle excludes from hope of pardon, namely, *apostates, who have alienated themselves from the gospel which they once embraced, and from the grace of God*, winch befallerh no man, but such an one who sins against the Holy Ghost.—Nor indeed doth *God despoil* any man *of his grace* so" or to such a degree "as to leave him nothing, but reprobates only. If any man asketh me, Why doth the apostle here make mention of such an apostasy, when as he speaks unto believers, who were far from so wicked a perfidiousness: I answer, He timously admonisheth them of the danger, that so they may take heed in time. Which is well worth the taking notice of, because when we turn aside out of the right way, we do not only excuse ourselves unto others, but even delude our own selves also." The same author, writing upon Matt. 24:13, hath these words, "Although the *love* of many being surcharged with the weight of iniquities, shall *fail*, yet Christ admonisheth that this obstacle also must be overcome, lest those that are *faithful* being tired out by evil examples should *start back*, therefore he repeats that saying, that none shall be saved, but he that shall strive lawfully so as to persevere unto the end." This author in his commentaries upon the Epistle to the Galatians is once and again led by the Spirit of truth to hid defiance to his own doctrine concerning the impossibility of the saints' final falling away. Once in these words, "He convinceth them of a defection" or falling away "not from his doctrine only, but from Christ himself. For they could not keep their hold on Christ upon any other terms, than by acknowledging, that by his benefit they were freed from the bondage of the law." This testimony cannot be eluded by this accustomed put off, viz., that he speaks not of their falling away from true faith, but from the doctrine of faith, or from the profession of faith; because he saith expressly, that the apostle convinceth them of, or reproveth them for, falling away from Christ himself, which is every whit as much, if not somewhat more, than falling away from true faith. Nor can it be supposed that himself, holding

that the apostle charged them with falling away from Christ, should hold that they had not thus fallen away, this being no less than to charge the apostle with charging the Galatians untruly. And besides, saying that they could not, *tenere Christum*, *i. e.* retain or keep their hold or possession of Christ, but upon such and such terms, he plainly supposeth, that a present hold or possession of Christ may be lost. Elsewhere in the same epistle, the same doctrine goeth to wreck by the pen of the great patron, or founder rather, of it, in these words. "The meaning is, if you seek for any part or piece of righteousness in the works of the law, **CHRIST becomes nothing to you, and you aliens from grace.** For their opinion was not so gross, as that they thought they should be justified by the alone observation of the law, but they mingled," or joined, "Christ with the law. Otherwise Paul should have had no ground to have terrified them with such threatenings as these, "What do you mean? You take *a course to make CHRIST unprofitable to you, you bring his grace to nothing.* Thus then we see that we cannot place, no, not the least part of our righteousness in the law, but we *renounce*" or bid farewell unto "*Christ and his grace.*" Renunciation hath no place, but in such things which were formerly either held, practised, or possessed: nor can the grace of Christ be said to be brought to nothing, in reference unto any man unto whom it was never any thing. He that never had or enjoyed the grace, favour, or good will of Christ, cannot, by any course or practice whatsoever, be said to bring it to nothing, *i. e.* wholly to deprive himself of the benefit of it. The reader's patience, I suppose, would hardly bear a particular recitation of all the passages and sayings, which with a little search might be drawn together out of the writings of this one author, who is generally looked upon as the main pillar of the common doctrine of perseverance, which yet strike at the very face of it. Yea, I verily believe, that, notwithstanding the great vote that is gotten up on the wing amongst us, of Calvin's judgment standing for the received opinion of perseverance, yea, notwithstanding his own sometimes disowning or disclaiming the contrary, yet there is every whit as much, or rather much more, to be found in his writings, of a fair and full comportance with the contrary doctrine, as with the said doctrine of perseverance. From whence I would infer, not so much the uncertainty or instability of judgment in so worthy a man, as the signal usefulness or necessity of such a principle or position in Christianity, without the help and



interposure whereof, those that are enemies unto it, know not how to manage many their Christian occasions, or affairs otherwise. The like observation we shall have occasion to take up in reference to all the other main points held forth and argued in this treatise, in opposition to vulgar tenets, presuming themselves orthodox, because vulgar. At present, I shall add only one testimony more from Calvin, wherein he doth not only or simply assert a possibility both of the total and final falling away of true believers, but even a frequent reduction into act of such a possibility. The place is in his Commentaries upon 2 Pet. 2. "For scarce every tenth man of those who have given up their names unto Christ, retain the purity of faith unto the end. All, in a manner, degenerate" and turn aside "unto corruptions, and being deluded by masters" or teachers "of licentiousness, grow profane." By men giving up their names to Christ, he cannot mean, bare, formal, or loose professors, (I mean such who never were other or better than these,) because such as these cannot be charged with a non-retainment of the purity of faith unto the end, but rather with a non-receiving of the purity of faith. Therefore he must of necessity mean sound professors or true believers: and consequently affirm, that there is not one of ten among these, but degenerate into principles and practices of looseness, and turn profanelings before the end. So that what Augustin said, long since, concerning Tertullian, that being acute, or sharp-witted, "He was sometimes overcome with a sight of the truth, contrary to his opinion, may be truly said of Calvin also. His apprehensiveness was such, that now and then a sight of the truth, even contrary to the standing purport of his judgment or opinion, glanced in upon him and overcame him, subjecting his pen and conscience at once, for a season, unto her service ; however, the vision ceasing, anticipated thoughts soon, it is like, recovered their former possession.

Nor was the truth, whose cause we plead, too hard only for him who was the Antesignanus, or leader on of those who have since declared themselves adversaries to her, so as to gain from him frequent and large testimonies, (as we have heard,) but hath been victorious, also, in the same kind, over those who followed him in the same unhappy undertaking against her.

Museulus is, in several places, as direct and thorough for a possibility of a total and final defection in true believers, as ever was Arminius himself. "If any man," saith he, "who hath obtained the forgiveness of his

sins past, through the grace of the clemency of God, shall become so notoriously ungrateful and neglective of his own salvation, as, like unto a dog returning to his vomit, to break off the course of his repentance, and shall plainly show that more despiseth than feareth God ; he declareth himself absolutely worthy to bear” or suffer “the punishment due to those former sins, from which he hath been absolved. And to this sense speak the two places which I have lately cited from Ezekiel. Besides, if he who through mercy hath obtained the forgiveness of a thousand talents, shall refuse to forgive his brother a hundred pence; that is, if he who hath obtained the remission of all his sins from God, Shall refuse to forgive his brother, upon his request made unto him in that behalf, a trespass or offence committed against him, is there any ground or cause why we should ask why such a man should be deprived of all that remission of sins which he hath obtained, and be called to suffer the punishment which he had deserved? It being most equal, that what we desire should be done unto ourselves, we also should do unto others: or if we shall deny or refuse to do this, that we should be deprived of that favour which we deny unto others. In this case, then, it may come to pass, and justly happeneth, that grace once received should be made vain, or frustrate. But this is not to be imputed to any instability of the Divine clemency, which in God hath no place, but unto our wickedness. In which respect the apostle, not without good ground, entreats and warns us, 2 Cor. 6, that we receive not the grace of God in vain.”

The same author, elsewhere, doth not only declare his judgment simply and positively for the doctrine asserted by us, but with a plain intimation, also, of his dissent herein from others. “Some dispute,” saith he, “whether it may not so come to pass, that such a sin, which was venial, may not by circumstances become mortal, as in case drunkenness should be much frequented, and become customary and anger by being long retained, become strengthened. My sense is, that even here also the quality of the offender ought to be considered. But if he, who was made partaker of the Divine grace, or favour, shall *fall from this grace, and of a person just, religious, faithful, and fearing God, shall become unjust, impious, unbelieving, and a contemner of God*, as this man’s conscience by losing the purity of faith, becomes liable unto death, so likewise all those sins of his, which whilst he was in grace were venial, are now turned into mortal. Thus we read, Ezek. 18, when the righteous shall

forsake his righteousness, and shall commit iniquities, he shall die in them. And again, all his righteousness shall not be remembered. Now what else can follow but that if a good tree be corrupted, the fruits which were good must become evil? They who from the principles or beginnings of faith, and of the good Spirit, degenerate into perfidiousness or unbelief, render the whole course of their lives, which was partaker of grace, culpable of death. Such as these are they, who, with the Galatians, begin indeed in the Spirit, but end in the flesh. They are liable unto condemnation, and their sins are no longer venial; but mortal, unless they repent, and return to the grace of the blood of Christ, from which they are fallen; if yet they be fallen upon no worse terms than that, they are in a capacity of returning unto grace. Some I know are otherwise minded in this point, but I freely declare mine own judgment without any injury done to them.” These last words, “Some I know are otherwise minded,” &c. plainly show: 1. That the deliberate and resolved judgment of this author stood for the possibility of a declining in true believers, even unto death, because he asserteth it *ἀντιθεγκώς*, and as having weighed the contrary opinion in the balance, and found it light. 2. That in his days though there were some of a contrary judgment to him in the point, yet the greater part of Protestant divines (for of these he clearly speaketh) or at least many of them, were consenting to him. For otherwise he would not have expressed himself thus, “Scio hic a nonnullis,” &c. “I know some are otherwise minded;” but rather have acknowledged his dissent herein from the generality of such men, or from the common or received opinion, or the like.

But for the clearness and thoroughness of his judgment on that side of the controversy on which we stand, several other passages in his writings speak home. “To this contristation,” saith he, writing upon Rom. 14, 15, “he aptly subjoineth the destruction of those who are offended at the unadvised liberty of the strong. For their mind being weak, through such an offence as this, easily falls to this point; begins by little and little, being further weakened by a sinister suspicion, *to fall away from Christianity and true faith.*” Upon Gal. 5:7, he commenteth these words: “When therefore he saith that the Galatians did run well, he commendeth their zeal and studiousness in true faith, and the religion of Christ; and withal signifieth that they might have attained the mark of true felicity and salvation had they persevered in that which they had well begun.” Upon

chap. 1:6, of the same epistle, his pen was ordered by him into words of like import, as viz. these: "He had planted the Galatians and watered them diligently, by the preaching of the gospel of God, hoping that it would have so come to pass that they would have increased in the knowledge and grace of Christ. But whilst he thus hopeth and wisheth, they are transplanted: or removed from him, in whom they had been planted." Once more upon Mat. 18:35, he observeth: "That those sins, which are through the grace of God pardoned at present, shall not be remitted or pardoned unless we shall forgive our brother. For it is an unjust thing that he should enjoy the remitment or forgiveness of a debt of ten thousand talents, who refuseth to forgive his brother a debt of an hundred pence." So that Musculus is no man for absolute perseverance.

Nor doth P. Martyr seem to be a man of any such engagement, by what he writeth upon 1 Cor. 13:2. "They who truly believe," saith he, "when they fall into heinous sins, and nevertheless believe the same things which they believed before, cannot be said to be without faith, when as notwithstanding they are despoiled of love" or charity. "But we do not grant or admit that such men have faith whilst they live in their sins. For of such the apostle witnesseth, that they profess to know God, but in works deny him. Therefore these men may be said to retain rather a show or shadow of faith than true faith indeed, of which we speak."

B. Aretius, in his commentary upon 2 Pet. 2:20, plainly enough discovereth himself to be of the same judgment, where, by those who through the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ had truly escaped the pollutions of the world, &c. he understandeth persons that had been once converted. As also upon 1 Cor. 8:2, where he supposeth a weak brother in the faith liable to perishing.

Nor can he that shall impartially consider what Bullinger writeth upon 1 Peter 1:5, conceive him to have been otherwise judgmented in the case. "In the meantime," saith he, "let this suffice us, that eternal happiness is in safety for us, which neither men nor devils can intercept," or deprive us of, "*unless faith fail us*, wherewith we should depend wholly upon heaven, with the neglect of things minded by mortal men." He that supposeth or affirmeth a man to be out of all danger or possibility of perishing, but only in case of a failing of his faith, necessarily supposeth: 1, That such a man is at present invested with such a faith, which is of the saving kind; and 2, that there is a possibility that this faith may fail him

before his end. To make an exception to a rule of an impossibility is to sacrifice either to laughter or folly.

Piscator himself likewise entertained this truth at unawares, when in his scholia upon Rom. 14:15, he maketh the apostle to say, that a “believer, for whom Christ died, may, through an offence taken, forsake the profession of the gospel, and so perish out of,” or without, “the faith of Christ.” For what is this, being interpreted, hut to affirm that true believers, even such for whom Christ died, may fall away so as to perish?

Nor doth the gloss of Mr. J. Deodat, as his Englisher presenteth it, upon 1 Cor. 8:11, look any other way. “*Perish*, i.e. saith he, “shall be in danger of wounding his conscience mortally; and whereas before through tenderness of conscience he abhorred any thing that drew near to idolatry, he may peradventure use himself to it, to *the shipwreck of his salvation*.” He that is dead, is in no danger of being wounded mortally; but he, who being alive, is in this danger, is in a possibility at least of suffering accordingly. Nor can any person be said to make shipwreck of that of which he never was possessed, nor yet to be in danger hereof.

Nor, doubtless, was learned Junius otherwise minded, when he delivered himself in these words, “If there were no possibility that a righteous man or believer might fall away, neither would the apostle have made this hypothesis, or supposition, nor would he have inferred so grave” or weighty “a saying upon the supposition; nor would he have applied this saying to the Hebrews, to whom he wrote in the cause which was now in hand.”

These passages also from the same author, are no slender evidences of the propension of his judgment the same way. “Nothing at all shall be wanting to us on the Lord’s part, if we be no wanting unto ourselves.” And again, “Christ requires only one condition from us, viz. That we abide in him, and be circumspect, and attent to keep ourselves from all sin and unbelief, even as he promiseth that he will abide in us.” In the former of these sayings, he clearly suspends the perseverance of the saints, and the continued collation of the grace of God, which is absolutely necessary hereunto, upon the care and faithful endeavours of men for the obtaining of it. In the latter, with like clearness, he makes their perseverance conditional, and requires circumspection and watchfulness in the saints, in order to their abiding in Christ, notwithstanding his promise of abiding in them; hereby plainly declaring,

that he understands this promise of Christ in a sense conditional, and not absolute.

Mollerus, upon Psalm 51:12, commenteth that “David lost the Holy Ghost by his sin, and was deprived of his gifts. So that, he departing from or not governing David, his heart became polluted with wickedness of all sorts. Therefore, he prays that a clean heart might be again created in him, which the apostle. Acts 15., calls a heart purified by faith, viz. from sin and the guilt thereof, that so he might have right thoughts of God, might truly acknowledge God, without hypocrisy or simulation, hut might come unto him, call upon him, believe on him, fear, obey him,” &c. This text needs no commentary.

I might here add the testimony and consent, both of former councils and synods, as likewise of the confessions of many late Reformed churches. But because others, have prevented me in both, as viz. the forementioned Gerard. Joh. Vossius in the former, and P. Bertius in the latter, I choose rather to desire the reader desirous of satisfaction in either, to consult these authors respectively, than to imbulk our present discourse with transcriptions, which are of so ready an inspection elsewhere.

Only for a taste, I shall here present the reader with a few lines out of the confession of the Reformed churches of Saxony, wherein they professedly give the right hand of fellowship to us in the doctrine held forth in our present digression. “When it is said,” saith this confession, “that sins remain in the regenerate, it is necessary that a difference be made. For from that saying, Luke 2., ‘He goes and takes unto him seven other spirits worse than himself, and they entering in dwell there,’ &c., and such like sayings, it is manifest, that some *regenerate persons* grieve and shake, or dash, the Holy Spirit out of them, *are again cast off by God, and become guilty of the wrath of God, and of eternal punishment.* And Ezek. 18, it is written, ‘When a righteous man shall forsake his righteousness, and shall commit iniquity, he shall die therein. And when the unrighteous shall forsake his unrighteousness, and do righteousness, he shall live therein.’ Therefore, there is a necessity of putting a difference between such sins which remain in holy men during this mortal life, hut do not expel or drive the Holy Ghost out of them, from such other sins from which a man becomes *again liable to the wrath of God, and to eternal punishment.* And Paul, in Rom. 5, distinguisheth between sin

reigning and not reigning. And elsewhere he saith, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but, if by the Spirit ye shall mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.' " With much more to the same point and purpose.

From the premises, exhibited in this chapter, these five things are concludable above all contradiction. First, That the doctrine of absolute and unconditioned perseverance, as it is commonly taught and believed amongst professors at this day, and as it is stated and maintained in the writings of many Reformed divines, over honoured, many of them, with the style of orthodox, was not known or heard of by the name of orthodox, in the primitive and purer times of Christian religion; nor owned or taught by any of the learned fathers or writers for several centuries of years after Christ. Secondly, That neither since the reformation of religion by Luther and his compeers hath it found entertainment with the generality, at least, of that numerous party of Protestants which, for distinction's sake, are termed Lutherans, or with the learned amongst them, but that these, very few, if any, excepted, generally teach and believe, with the primitive Christians and fathers, that persons truly regenerate and believing may possibly fall from their present standing, and that so as never to rise again. Thirdly, That this doctrine (I mean, the possibility of such a declining in true believers, which ends in death and condemnation,) is by some, who otherwise are generally looked upon as followers of Calvin, yea, and are, not undeservedly, numbered amongst the most judicious and learned of this party, pregnantly, and with particularity of profession and acknowledgment, avouched. Fourthly, that Calvin himself, who is supposed to be the first founder or father of the said common doctrine of perseverance, or, however, is the grand patron and protector of it, together with the generality of his learned followers, are constrained, ever and anon, in their writings, to give testimony unto and to assert the contrary, whether it be by the forcible evidence of the truth prevailing at times over them, or whether it be out of a necessity that ever and anon recurred upon them, to use the principle of the contrary doctrine, for the due managing and carrying on other subjects and discourses. Fifthly, and lastly, That the doctrine of falling away, maintained in the digression yet in hand, hath been held, maintained, and professed, not only by particular persons, both ancient and modern, of greatest name and note for true worth in every kind, as for sanctity, learning, largeness of parts,

soundness of judgment, &c., but by councils, synods, and whole Protestant churches, also, in their confessions. All which considered, we shall need no other demonstration of the importune unreasonableness and vanity of those ecstasical and wild encomiums, or exorbitant depredications of the doctrine of inevitable and unfrustrable perseverance, which are found in the writings and heard from the mouths of some of the over-zealous admirers of it, as if, for example, it were the fundamental article of the Reformed religion; one of the principal points of Christian religion, wherein the Protestant churches are purged from popish errors, and which hath always been maintained by the Reformed churches against Papists; the foundation of all true certainty of salvation, without which that fiducial and firm assurance which is requisite in and unto true believing cannot stand; such a doctrine, which all true ministers of the gospel ought to inculcate into and whet upon all true believers for their comfort, with other like swelling words of vanity. Doubtless, if it be an error, and confederate against the holiness and truth of the gospel, (a crime which hath been by many competent and sufficient witnesses proved against it,) it is so far from meriting any of those impotent acclamations lately specified, that it really deserves to have its portion with those merchants and money-changers whom our Saviour with a scourge drove out of the temple, John 2:15, as profaners of the holy design and counsel of God therein.

But, because the learning and authority of the late Synod of Dort is laid hold on by many, as shield and buckler to defend the said doctrine, I shall, for a close of this chapter, and of the whole digression, briefly account unto the reader for such particulars as I judge worthy his cognizance and observation, in and about what this Synod attempted, in order to the defence, maintenance, and safety of the said doctrine. Far be it from me to subscribe the report or information of those who charge the respective members of this Synod with suffering themselves to be bound with an oath, at or before their admission hereunto, to vote down the Remonstrants and their doctrines howsoever; yet, when I read and consider, 1. How learnedly, solidly, and substantially they quit themselves and argue, whilst they go along with the Remonstrants, and declare wherein they agree with them, in the points controverted between them; 2. How feebly and unlike themselves they reason when they come to the quick of the difference; 3, and lastly, How near, at very many turns, even



in those things wherein they pretend to differ, they come unto them, as if they had a very good mind to be no more two, but one with them; when, I say, I consider all these things, methinks I see the interest and obligation of an oath working much after the same manner as sometimes it did in Herod, when, “ for his oath’s sake,” contrary to his mind and desire otherwise, he caused John the Baptist’s head to be given unto Herodias in a platter, Matt. 14:9. To show how pregnant, or, if you will, how masculine they are, in avouching their judgments, whilst they keep company with their adversaries, is, I conceive, needless, as well themselves (I mean such of them as are yet living) as their friends being persuasible enough hereof, without argument or proof. To show how far they fall beneath themselves, when they come to contest and plead the points in difference, would be, in effect, and in reference to the business in hand, but to re-do that which is done already ; in which respect neither is this necessary; I shall, therefore, with as much brevity as the reader can well desire, and in, a regular prosecution of the design of the chapter in hand, only show how near they came, in sense and substance of matter, to their adversaries, in the present question concerning perseverance; and leave it to Christian consideration, whether the difference between the two combating parties was of that latitude or weight that the one should deserve the beautiful crown of orthodoxism and honour for their dissent from their adversaries; and the other, the punishment, shame, and reproach of persons so deeply and desperately erroneous, for their non-agreement with theirs. This Synod of Dort expressly granteth, that not only they who are under a possibility of falling away, both totally and finally, but who, de facto, will thus fall away, (for their non-electi signify such men as these,) may be supernaturally enlightened, by virtue whereof they may understand that those things which are reported, or laid down, in the word of God, are true, and do give an *unfeigned assent* unto them.” And again; That “such as these are enlightened with the supernatural knowledge of the truth of the gospel; which enlightening proceeding from the Holy Ghost, begets true knowledge in their minds, from whence, as oft as is needful, they may act or work conformably to it.” And yet further; That “the seed which fell upon the stony ground signifies, or points but, such hearers, who for a time believe, *i. e.* Who assent unto the things revealed by God, and more especially to the covenant of the gospel. And that their assent in this kind was no ways counterfeit or feigned appears

from hence, that they received the word with joy." By the express tenor of this discourse, most evident it is, that this Synod granteth a possibility of falling away, both totally and finally, in those, at least in many of them, who by means of a supernatural illumination, and this wrought by the Holy Ghost, come truly and unfeignedly to believe the gospel, yea, and to live and to walk conformably unto it. So then if it be made to appear by clear evidence of Scripture that such as these, viz. who truly and unfeignedly believe the gospel, live conformably to it, &c., are true and sound believers, in an estate of justification, acceptation with God, &c., it undeniably follows, that this Synod, which with the weight of their sentence ground to powder their brethren termed Remonstrants, for their opinions, as being of most dangerous and desperate consequence, (especially this, concerning the possibility of a non-perseverance in true believers,) were in the very same condemnation themselves, held and asserted the same errors, if yet errors they were, with them. I speak now only concerning their dogmatizing with them in the point of perseverance, the fifth and last head of the controversies between them. But the truth is, and an intelligent reader may readily find it, that in other points also, wherein they sentenced the persons mentioned as men so extremely and dangerously erroneous, as in the question about the extent of Christ's death, the extent of saving grace, &c., they deliver and maintain the same things with the persons sentenced by them, if not formally in plainness and expressness of terms, though sometimes they want very little even of this, yet arguitively, in grounds and principles manifestly bearing and issuing forth the same conclusions, as we shall have occasion to show, God willing, in the progress of our present discourse.

Or though it could not be proved from the Scriptures that the persons subjected to a possibility of a total and final apostasy, by the Synod, are true and real believers, yet if they were, or be, such in the sense and judgment of the Remonstrants, which is apparent enough that they were and are, the Synod had no cause to fall foul upon them, as erroneously dissenting from them in the point of perseverance, but only as dissenters, or erroneous, in judging discerning the difference between sound and unsound believers, or between persons justified and not justified. But this only by the way.

But that the persons liabled by the Synod to a defection from faith,

both total and final, as, viz. such who, being supernaturally enlightened, have the true knowledge of God, unfeignedly the gospel, act conformably, have their affections in part changed, their lives in part reformed, their persons in part renewed, &c., are by the Scriptures adjudged for true and sound believers, for persons truly justified, &c., is so apparent, that to me there seems no place left for doubting, unless, haply, prejudice or anticipation of judgment makes room for any man in this kind. Yea, the Scripture makes not only the collection, or joint concurrence of the particulars specified, a distinguishing character of true and sound believers from those who are not such, but some of them even singly and apart from others. As, 1. A true and unfeigned belief of, or assent unto, the things revealed by God in the gospel. “But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name,” John 20:31. First, there is nothing more evident than that the word of God doth report and declare, that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” 2. It is here plainly asserted, that to believe this, at least with a true and unfeigned faith or belief, is available unto “life,” or salvation. Otherwise we must say that that faith, for the effecting and working whereof in the hearts of men the gospel was written, is unavailable to save them. Which to affirm, what is it but to bring an evil and hard report upon the gracious counsel and intendment of God in causing the gospel to be written? But the same truth is most manifestly asserted in very many places besides. “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:5. To “overcome the world” is an unquestionable character of a person justified, and in favour with God. And “whosoever,” saith John, “believeth that Jesus is the Son of God,” partakes in this glory, is victorious “over the world.” So again, the Lord Christ, having a little before his ascension commissioned his apostles thus, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature,” he immediately subjoineth, “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mark 16:15, 16. That “believing” which our Saviour here requires, and unto which he promiseth salvation, is doubtless no other faith, or believing, but a true and unfeigned belief of that gospel of his which his apostles, in the words immediately preceding, were enjoined to “preach unto the world.” And if it shall be said, that men might, or may “believe,” and that truly and unfeignedly, all that the

apostles preach to them, and yet perish; that vast and signal difference which our Saviour here makes between “believing” and “not believing” vanisheth into nothing, is made none at all. See further upon the same account, John 8:24, and 11:27; Acts 8:37, 38; Rom. 4:3, and 10:9; with very many other texts of like pregnant and unquestionable import. From all which it fully appeareth, that a true and unfeigned admission or reception of the gospel, as it cometh from God, and is declared by him in the writings of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, into the heart and soul of a man, (which is done by a true and unfeigned belief of, or consent unto it,) translates him from death to life, makes him a child of light, a son of God, an heir of salvation, &c. And what faith or belief, can it reasonably be imagined, should have this mighty and blessed influence upon the creature man, to turn him from darkness unto light, from death unto life, from Satan unto God, but only the true and unfeigned belief of those glorious mysteries which were brought out of the breast and bosom of God by his Son Jesus Christ, at his coming into the world ?

That a true, cordial, unfeigned belief of the gospel, and things of God, is true justifying faith, hath been the sense and doctrine of the best and most judicious authors, as well ancient as modern, I could instance and prove at large, if it were not somewhat too eccentrical to the business in hand. “It is,” saith Calvin, “the righteousness,” *i. e.* the justification, “of faith, if we believe that Christ died, and was raised up again from the dead.” Elsewhere he saith, that the apostle Paul “defines those to be faithful,” or true believers, “who have the *knowledge* of sound doctrine;” and pronounceth the faith of Sarah, whom he calls “the mother of all believers,” to consist in this, “That she judged God faithful, or true, and that in his promises.” Luther, speaking of Abraham, saith that “he was justified only upon this, that he gave credence to the word of God;” interpreting that of Moses, Gen. 15:6, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness as if he had said, “Abraham believed God to be true in his words and promises, and was therefore counted a worthy and righteous man by God.” And learned Chamier defines Abraham’s faith, whereby he was justified, “*Ingentem confidentiam super promissione divina, quamille credidit omnino implendam ;*” *i. e.* a mighty confidence of the promise of God, which he believed would absolutely be fulfilled. Peter Martyr most frequently, and I think I might say constantly, in his writings, placeth justifying faith in a firm belief or assent unto the

gospel or word of God. "Our faith," saith he, "is nothing else but *an assent or firm persuasion of the words of God*. From whence it appears that our faith proceeds from the faith" or faithfulness "of God. For when our experience teacheth us that he is faithful, we readily believe him; and that belief which we give to his words, is presently attended with hope." By which last words it is evident, that he speaks of true justifying faith in the former. Again: "Faith may be defined to be a firm and constant assent of the mind to the words of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost for the salvation of those that believe. In this definition there is none of the four causes wanting: the word of God is the matter," or material cause; "*the act of consenting, the formal*"; the Holy Ghost, the efficient; our salvation, the final." In which words it is observable, that he expressly makes the formal cause of justifying faith to consist in the act of assenting or consenting (to the word of God). Yet again: "To believe, as to our purpose, is by means of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to exhibit," or give, "*a firm assent* unto the word of God, and this for the authority of God himself." And not long after: "Let us now infer that faith is" a gift or faculty, inspired into us by the Spirit of God, whereby we yield *a firm and settled assent* unto the word of the Lord by means of his authority." Once more: "In this dispute," of justifying faith, "by faith we understand, that *firm assent*, which is of so great strength and efficacy, that it draweth along with it the effect of affiance, hope, and charity, together with all good works, as the infirmity of this present life will bear." From the latter words of this testimony it plainly appears, that the sense of this author is, that that trust, recumbency, or reliance upon God or Christ, wherein the said Synod, with some others, placeth, as it seems, the essence of justifying faith, is no part of this faith, hut only a necessary effect or consequent of that firm assent unto the gospel or word of God, wherein he placeth the entire essence of this faith, as we have heard. Of which unquestionable truth I could join many co-assertors unto him, of approved learning and worth, as Chamier, Dr. George Downham, and others, if I conceived it any ways necessary or commodious to the business in hand.

But I have still a considerable reserve of resolute doctors to make good against the Synod of Dort, that they themselves assert and teach a possibility of a final apostasy in persons truly justified, as well as their opposers, the Remonstrants, notwithstanding their heavy censure passed

upon them for this doctrine, such I mean who place true justifying faith in a certain knowledge of, or firm assent unto the word of God; and consequently conclude those to be persons truly justified, against some of which the said Synod doth not only vouch and teach a possibility of their total and final defection, but even a necessity also ; which is a strain of contest against the necessity of the saints' perseverance, higher than ever any Arminian or Remonstrant wound up his pen unto. "We therefore," saith Gualter, "say, that faith is a certain firm assent of mind arising from the word of God, whereby we acknowledge Christ for such as the Scriptures exhibit him unto us" (or hold him forth to be). "That faith," saith Melancthon, "which justifieth, is not only a notice of the history, but it is *to assent* to the promise of God, wherein remission of sins and justification are freely offered for Christ's sake." And elsewhere he affirms this faith to be "*an assent* to every word of God delivered to us." Chemnitius delivers this definition of justifying faith as more generally approved of by Protestant divines, and by himself also : " Faith is *to assent* unto the whole word of God delivered unto us, and herein to the free promise of reconciliation granted" unto us "for Christ" our "mediator." Musculus observeth, that "In the example of Abraham in the Scriptures, this is not only commended," or taken knowledge of, "that he believed there was only one God, but that he believed the promises of God;" clearly implying, that his belief of these promises was that faith which justified him. Zanchius reports this to be a definition of justifying faith, which Bucer and other orthodox divines gave: "Faith is the gift of God, and work of the Holy Ghost in the mind of the elect, whereby they *believe the gospel* of Christ. Himself elsewhere frameth us this definition: "Faith is a virtue given unto us by God, by which we *are persuaded*, that whatsoever was heretofore propounded by the prophets and apostles in the name of God, and is now preached unto us out of their writings, is the word of God, and believe and profess this whole word, as well the law as the gospel, as the certain word of God." Beza affirmeth, that "The state of the epistle to the Romans is to be ordered," or disposed of in our judgments, "thus: That we are saved by God through one Christ, *if we shall believe the gospel.*" Polanus describes justifying faith "*A knowledge and assent*, whereby a man believeth all that to be true which God hath commanded to be believed." Ursine thus: "Faith is a true persuasion, whereby we *assent* to every word of God delivered unto

us.” “If thou,” saith Mr. Tyndal, the martyr, “*believest the promises of God, the truth of God justifieth thee, i. e. he forgiveth thee thy sins, and taketh thee into favour.*”

Give me leave to instance one author more. Dr. J. Davenant, a member of those convened in the Synod at Dort, et quorum pars magna fuit, arguing against Bellarmine, the non-abolition of faith, even in the glorified condition itself of the saints, in respect of the nature, habit, or essence of it, useth this demonstration: viz., that “those who are in an estate of perfect blessedness are so” affected or “disposed that they are willing to assent unto God, not only because of the evidence of the matter, but also for the authority of the asserter, although the thing affirmed were in itself inevident.” Yea, and further saith, that “there is none of the blessed” or glorified “ones hut will much more readily believe God for the authority of the speaker, than he that is endued with the greatest faith amongst travellers,” (i. e. amongst the saints that axe yet in the course of their pilgrimage upon the earth.) Therefore, questionless, his sense also was, at least when he wrote these things, that a true, firm, and unfeigned assent unto God, speaking, asserting, or revealing, is true faith and justifying; for about this was the contest between him and his adversary. And besides, the whole tenor of the discourse there managed makes this manifest.

Fearing lest I have overcharged the reader’s patience already, I supersede the citation of the ancient fathers, besides others more of our later Protestant authors, who generally look upon it as no injury to truth to hold and teach that a true, real, and unfeigned assent unto the gospel and promises of salvation herein, is nothing less than a true justifying and saving faith, a faith instating a person in the grace and favour of God. So that, 1, by the express testimony of the Scriptures themselves; 2, by the conviction of sound reason; and lastly, by a verdict of the most judicious and learned of their own friends, at least claimed and owned for such by themselves, the Synod of Dort, who levied a hard and most severe sentence against the possibility of the saints perishing by apostasy, have stumbled at that stone of inexcusableness of which the apostle speaks, Rom. 2:1: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost the same things.” Yea, it hath been proved that

this Synod itself flew a higher pitch of opposition against the perseverance of the saints than those who upon this account were made such grand offenders by them.

This indictment we have hitherto managed and made good against them by the consideration of one character or expression only from their own pen, whereby they describe those, whom they expose to a possibility of apostatising to perdition, viz., a true and unfeigned belief of or consent unto the evangelical compact, and whatsoever is revealed by God in the gospel. This we have proved by a cloud of witnesses, some speaking from heaven, others from the earth, to be an inseparable and essentially distinguishing character of true saints and justified men. But,

2. If we judged, or could think that the reader would judge, that which hath been done already insufficient to evince the Synod, though not of error or heresy, yet of autocatacrisy or self-condemnation, we should insist upon and urge other expressions from them, whereby it may be made yet further to appear that their foot is in very deed in that snare we speak of. For do they not say and confess in words plain enough, which have been cited, that the persons put by them under a possibility, yea, some of them (*horrendum dictu*) *under a necessity* of that doomful apostasy which is always accompanied with eternal perdition, may have, and that many of them *de facto* have, the true knowledge (of God and of Christ, or of God in Christ) in their mind, for what other knowledge they should here mean is not imaginable, and that out of this knowledge they may as oft as is needful (is not this constantly and without turning aside ?) act conformably ? And what is this hut to bring forth fruits worthy repentance, yea, and to equalise the best and worthiest of the saints in doing righteousness, which the Holy Ghost makes the most emphatical and unerring property or character of such men. “Little children, let no man deceive you,” saith John, “he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous,” 1 John 3:7; of which passage formerly, Chap. 9. p. 232, and Chap. 11. p. 358. And again, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God,” 1 John 3:10 ; and consequently whosoever doth righteousness is of God. For otherwise the not doing of righteousness were no manifestation of the one sort of these children from the other.

3, and lastly, Whereas the Synod pleads, that the seed tailing upon the



stony ground, Luke 8:13, imports such hearers which for a time believe, *i. e.* give an unfeigned assent unto the things revealed by God in the gospel, and afterwards fall away, whereby they would insinuate that these hearers, notwithstanding their unfeigned assent unto the things of God and the gospel, were never true saints, nor persons justified before God ; we have formerly by an impartial inquiry into the parable, and by many pregnant arguments drawn from the carriage of it, evinced that the persons emparabled by the seed falling upon the stony ground were true saints and their faith of the same kind, and, during the continuance of it, equally justifying with theirs, who were represented by the good ground, Chap. 12. p. 390, 391.

Leaving therefore the Synod at present, let us recollect, and draw up into a brief account the sum of all that hath been argued in the present digression, and so conclude this chapter.

First, It hath been clearly proved, that the doctrine which maintains an absolute necessity, or infallibility of the saints' perseverance in grace or faith unto the end, hath nothing more in it (or rather nothing so much) for the true and real consolation of the saints than that which is contrary unto it. Secondly, Diligent and impartial search hath been made into those passages of Scripture which the greatest advocates of the said doctrine of perseverance mainly insist upon for the defence of it; none of which, it hath been made fully to appear, holdeth any true or real correspondency with it. Thirdly, The best and most substantial arguments and grounds upon which the said doctrine is wont, by the skilfullest workmen of her party, to be built, have been weighed in the balance, and found too light. Fourthly, The doctrine contrary hereunto and which avoucheth the possibility of the saints' declining, and this unto death, hath been asserted by the express testimony and consent of many Scriptures. Fifthly, This doctrine also hath received further credit and confirmation from several principles and grounds, as well of reason as religion, and these pregnant and strong. Sixthly, The truth of this latter doctrine hath been further ascertained by several instances and examples of persons, who by their fallings have caused the said doctrine to stand impregnable. Seventhly, This doctrine hath been countenanced, also, by the concurrent sense of all orthodox and Christianly-learned antiquity. Eighthly, It hath likewise received testimony from the generality of that learning and religion, since the times of reformation, which have

commended themselves unto the world in the works and writings of that party of men in the Protestant churches, which is commonly known by the name of Lutheran. Ninthly, Substantial proof hath been made, that the professed adversaries of the doctrine we now speak of, even the most steady, grave, and best advised of them, have at unawares given large and clear testimony unto it, being not able, without the help of the spirit which speaketh in it, to manage, like themselves, their discursive affairs in other cases. Yea, tenthly, and lastly, That the Synod of Dort itself, convening with a conscientious, if not with a concupiscentious prejudice also (for this is the strong suspicion of many) against it, with its fellows, and intending and provoking one another to lay the honour of it in the dust for ever, hath, at several turns and in divers expressions, according to the interpretation and sense of their own most orthodox and learned friends, yea and some of themselves, fully comported with it, asserting that, in clearness and evidence of principle, which they deny with solemnity of protest, and with a religious abhorrency in conclusion.

We now return to the further prosecution of the business principally intended in this discourse, (from which we have made somewhat a large digression, upon the occasion formerly specified,) and to complete our demonstration of this great and most important truth, viz. That the ever blessed Son of God, and Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave himself a ransom in his death, for all and every man, without exception of any.

## CHAPTER 16.

**Several other Texts of Scripture (besides those formerly produced in ranks and companies') argued to the clear eviction of truth, in the same doctrine, viz. That the redemption purchased by Christ in his death, was intended for all and every man, without exception of any.**

HAVING in our late digression largely vindicated some material proofs from the Scripture, formerly levied for the defence of that great and most important cause, both of God and men, the universality of redemption by Christ, we now proceed to a further levy upon the same account, and shall raise up more Scriptures to plead the same cause.

Let us begin with the parable of the marriage feast, as it is reported by Matthew and Luke. We shall not need, I suppose, to transcribe the whole protasis of the parable, which is very large: but only insist upon some few known passages of it, such as I conceive will jointly, if not severally, give a light of demonstration to the truth of that doctrine, the proof and confirmation whereof is the prize contended for in this discourse. However, if the reader desires an entire inter-view of the parable, he may repair, without much trouble, to the evangelists themselves, Matt, 22:2, &c.; Luke 14:16, &c.

First, Expositors generally agree, that by those who were the first and second time called or invited to the wedding, "He sent forth his servants to call them that had been called to the wedding," Matt. 22:3, are typified, or meant, the Jews, whom God had anciently invited and called, by the ministry of his prophets, and several other ways, to partake of that great blessedness, which he intended to confer upon the sons and daughters of men, by means of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and who were the second, yea, and the third time also, invited hereunto; first by John the Baptist and the Lord Christ himself, and afterwards by his apostles.

Secondly, The tenor or form of the invitation, which the servants sent forth to call those that had been formerly invited, were enjoined by the king to use in calling them, is this: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my failings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage," Matt, 22:4. When he saith to those that are invited, "I have

prepared my dinner, my oxen,” &c. doubtless his meaning is not that he had prepared his dinner for others, or that his oxen and fatlings were killed for the entertainment of others, and not for those who were invited by him. Such an intendment as this in his invitation had been merely delusory, and altogether unmeet to represent the intentions of God, in calling men to communion and fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, by his ministers of the gospel. He that should invite a man to a feast, and use such an argument or motive as this, to persuade him to accept of this his invitation, and to come accordingly, viz. that he had made very liberal preparations for such and such other men, but had provided nothing for him, should he not render himself ridiculous by such a strain of oratory?

Thirdly, Evident it is, that very many of those who were invited to this marriage feast by the king, and consequently for whom the feast was prepared, and for whose sake the oxen and fatlings were killed, never came to partake of the said feast, but were ejected and excluded from it with great indignation, by him that had so graciously invited them. “But when the king heard thereof,” (viz. how they had misused and murdered his servants,) “he was wroth, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city,” ver. 7. Concerning whom, likewise, the king said to his servants, that had been sent forth to invite them: “I say unto you, that none of those men that were hidden” (and refused to come) “shall taste of my supper,” Luke 14:24.

Fourthly, It is no less evident, that the true ground or reason why those that were thus excluded from the feast, or suffered this exclusion, was not any precedent purpose or intendment in the king to exclude them, (for had any such intention harboured in him, questionless he would never have invited them,) no nor yet that subsequent intendment in him to exclude them, when he saw their great unworthiness; but this unworthiness of theirs itself. “Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready; but they which were bidden were *not worthy*. Go ye, therefore, into the highways,” &c. Matt. 22:8. Clearly implying, that it was the *unworthiness* of the persons invited, which was the true and proper cause of their exclusion. Neither the import nor sentence of the law, nor yet the judge, or his just severity in giving sentence according to the law, are so properly the cause of the punishment or death of the malefactor, as the crime committed against the law by himself. It is merely accidental to the law and to the judge, and so to their intentions respectively, that such or

such a person becomes a malefactor, and, consequently, that he suffers death. But the suffering punishment, or death, are the natural and proper fruits of the violation of the law, justly inflicting them in whomsoever it be found. And if the matters of fact deserve punishment or death, it would argue a defect in the law and in the judge, if they should not, according to their different capacities, give sentence accordingly. We have, as I remember, elsewhere shown, that neither God, nor any decree or law of his, are any cause, intentionally or directly, of any man's either sin or punishment, but occasionally or accidentally only; and that so, that whosoever sinneth, or comes to be punished for sin, might have avoided both, any purpose, law, or decree of God notwithstanding. And to this purpose pertinent is the observation made by Musculus, upon our Saviour's expression, Matt. 22:2. *ὁμοιωθή βασιλεία των ουρανών, &c. i. e.* The kingdom of heaven is made like, or become like," (not is like,) "unto a certain king," &c. "For," saith he, "the kingdom of heaven is not such a thing, that all the particulars here," in this parable, "reported of it, should belong to the nature of it: but several of them are accidental to it, through the wickedness of men. Otherwise, this kingdom doth not of itself, or in its proper nature, tend to the destruction of any man," &c.

Fifthly and lastly, The pregnant result of the premised particulars is this, that the marriage feast in the parable was provided by the king, and the oxen and fatlings, here spoken of, killed not only for those who upon their invitation were persuaded to come and partake of them, but as well, and with equal, if not with more especial, intentions on the king's part, for those also who never came to taste of them; and consequently, that the death of Christ, signified by the oxen and fatlings slain, and the blessedness accruing unto the children of men hereby, signified by the feast itself, were equally meant and intended by God for those who perish and for those who are saved, and consequently for all men, without exception of any. And indeed this purport of the parable lieth so large and full in the carriage of it, that Calvin himself could not but subscribe unto it, as he that shall please to peruse his commentaries upon Matt. 22:2, and withal acknowledge what is evident, must needs confess. Amongst several other passages facing this way, having specified some points of difference between Matthew and Luke in recording the parable, he saith, that yet "in the sum and substance of the matter they very well agree, viz. that whereas God vouchsafed this peculiar honour to the Jews, to provide

and *furnish a table of entertainment for them*, they rejected this honour proffered to them.” And saith moreover, that “whereas many expositors refer the marriage of the king’s son” in the parable “to this point, that Christ is the end of the law, and that God had *no other intent in his covenant* with this people than to set him” as a king or ruler “over them, and by the sacred band of a spiritual marriage to join a church unto him, I freely accord with them herein.”

Afterwards, upon verse 9 of the same chapter, “But,” saith he, “if God then spared not the natural branches, the same vengeance hangeth over us at this day, unless we answer when he calleth. Yet shall not the supper *provided*” or prepared “*for us* he lost, hut God will furnish himself with other guests.” In these passages, this great supposed enemy to the universality of redemption by Christ, clearly supposeth, or affirmeth rather, the same to be a truth; for he expressly affirmeth that God provided a table of entertainment for those who rejected it and never came unto it, and supposeth that the “supper provided” by God “for us,” may, through our neglect of our invitation hereunto, he withheld from us, and that others may he admitted unto it in our stead. If the death of Christ, and salvation by him, were provided and prepared by God as well for those who reject, them as for those who embrace them, doubtless they were intended for all men without exception: which truth, as was lately observed, is so necessary for the due managing of the Scriptures, and many other the most important affairs in Christian religion, that the professed enemies thereof are ever and anon constrained and forced to make use of it, both in opening the Scriptures, as likewise in their other theological discussions and debates, and so consequently to give testimony unto it. And the very truth is, that it is one of the main pillars that supports and bears up the weighty fabric of that divinity and religion which the Scriptures hold forth unto the world.

Another piece of Scripture rising up in assertion of the same doctrine is that which speaks in these words: *Ἐπιφανή γάρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θείου ἡ σωτήριος πάσιν ὀνθρώποις*, &c., *i. e.*, word for word, “For there hath appeared the grace of God, which is saving unto all men,” or, “being saving unto all men,” Tit. 2:11; that is, which is of a saving nature, property, or tendency, unto all men. The Syriac translation reads, “*Servatrix omnium*,” the saviouress of all men. Our last English translators, rendering the place thus, “For the grace of God, which

bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men,” show themselves more indulgent to their own sense and opinion than will well stand with the ingenuousness and faithfulness required in translators, an infirmity too apparent in them at several other turns; though the truth is, that this translation of the words damnifies their opinion one way as much or more than it gratifies it in another: for in making the apostle to say that the “saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men,” they suppose him to be of their judgment, who conceive the gospel and the saving grace thereof to be discovered and preached by God unto men, not only by the ministry of men, or by the letter of the gospel itself, but by the works of creation also, and the gracious government of the world. For certain it is, that the “saving grace” of God, of which the apostle here speaks, had not at this time “appeared unto all men” upon any other terms. But this by the way. Our former translators dealt much more fairly with the Holy Ghost at this place, rendering and pointing the words thus: “For that grace of God, that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared.” The “grace of God,” in Christ, is here said to be *σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*, salvific unto all men, not because it is such to all sorts or ranks of men only, or to some men of all sorts and degrees, (as some, not fearing to destroy the clear sense of the Holy Ghost to salve their own, interpret,) but because it is such to “all men” simply and without exception of any. This exposition is confirmed,

1. From the context, in the words immediately following, wherein the proper end or ducture of this “saving grace of God,” now discovered, is declared thus: “Teaching us that denying all godliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world.” If, then, this “saving grace of God teacheth,” *i. e.* be apt to teach, persuade, and lead “all men” without exception, as well one as another, to a denial of “all ungodliness,” . . . . and to “live soberly,” . . . . then must it needs be alike saving unto all. For if this teaching property in it flows from the savingness of it, which the apostle here clearly supposeth, then must the savingness of it necessarily be of equal extent with that property. An act of grace, love, or bounty, inviteth, obligeth no more unto thankfulness than those to whom it is meant and intended. Now, certain it is, that the saving grace of God, held forth and proffered unto all men in the gospel, teacheth, inviteth, persuadeth, obligeth all men without exception, as well one as another, to deny ungodliness, &c., to live soberly, &c: otherwise we

must say that there are some men who ought not, who are no ways bound, to learn any of these things from the gospel, nor to practise them upon any account of grace or love tendered herein from God unto them: which, I suppose, is a saying too hard for any considering man to digest.

2. The words themselves in their grammatical, native, and proper signification, give out the sense and exposition specified. The “grace of God” here spoken of is expressly said to be σωτήριος πασιν ἀνθρώποις, *i. e.*, “saving,” or salvific “unto,” or apt to save, “all men.” And of what dangerous, consequence it is to turn the words of the Holy Ghost out of their proper and best known significations into any by, devious, and qualified sense, when there is no necessity of doing it, hath been once and again admonished and declared in the premises.

3. The exposition given fairly accordeth the passage in hand with many other its fellow-Scriptures, as where God is said to have “prepared his salvation (τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ) before the face of *all* people,” Luke 2:30; to be “willing to have *all* men saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” 1 Tim. 2:4: so again, “to have *none* perish, but to have *all men* come to repentance,” 2 Pet. 3:9; and again, where Christ is said, “through the grace of God,” to have “tasted death for *every man*,” Heb. 2:9: to omit several others, which we have demonstratively proved to be of one mind and one heart with the said passage, so understood, as now interpreted.

4, and lastly, The exposition given is attested by orthodox interpreters, so owned and acknowledged by our adversaries. “By name,” saith Pelican, “he testifieth (the grace of God) to be *common to the universe of men*,” or to men universally, “because of servants, of whom he had spoken.” And presently after: “But we are *all* one in Christ, we are *all universally* called to the kingdom of God, we were, *all*, after the offence given, to be reconciled unto our Father.” Aretius, upon the place, affirmeth that “the gospel offers the grace of God unto *all men*,” and hereupon infers, that “therefore it concerns *all men* to adorn the doctrine hereof with their lives and manners.” If “the gospel offers the saving grace of God unto all men,” and “all men” upon this account stand bound “to adorn the doctrine thereof,” then must this grace, in the offer of it, and so in the intention of him who offers it in the gospel, be saving, *i. e.* of a saving tendency and import unto “all men.” Yea, if “all men” stand alike bound, in respect of the alike offer of it respectively unto them, (neither of which



alike­ness can rea­sonably be de­nied, or in­deed ques­tioned,) it is a plain case that the sav­ing­ness of it, and sal­va­tion by it, is by God alike in­tended un­to all men. But from the uni­ver­sal offer of grace un­to men in the gos­pel, we have for­merly ar­gued and e­vic­ted real in­ten­tions in God of sal­va­tion by Christ un­to “all men,” with­out ex­cep­tion.

As for those trivial e­vasions from this and such like Scrip­tures, as, viz. that by “all men,” may be meant ei­ther great num­bers of men, or all sorts, or some of all sorts and ranks of men, or Jews and Gen­tiles ; and so again, that the grace of God may be said to be “sav­ing un­to all men,” be­cause there is a suf­fi­ciency of merit in Christ to save all men, though the sal­va­tion of all men by him be not in­tended by God, &c. These, I say, with the like put-offs, we have al­ready, upon like oc­casions fre­quently oc­cur­ring, de­tected of van­ity, and showed their clear in­con­sis­ten­cy with the prin­ciples, as well of that “wisdom which is re­vealed from hea­ven” in the Scrip­tures, as of that rea­son and un­der­stand­ing which are nat­urally in­grafted in men. If any man’s judg­ment be yet tem­pted with a face of any seem­ing beauty or strength in any of them, he may, I pre­sume, be de­livered from fur­ther in­con­ve­nience in this kind by a second re­view of the sixth chapter of this dis­course, at least if he shall di­ligently con­sider what is to be seen there.

In the next chapter of the same epistle, the apostle addeth light un­to light in the busi­ness in hand, ex­pressing him­self thus : “ But after that the kind­ness and love of God our Saviour to­wards men ap­peared,” &c. 2 Tit. 3:4, *Ἡ χρι̑α τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ καλῆς ἀγαθῆς* the goodness and the love of God to­wards man. I here demand, How or whether God can, in any tolerable con­struc­tion of rea­son or com­mon sense, be said to be *ἠγαπᾷ τὸν ἄνθρωπον*, a lover of men, or to bear an af­fec­tion of love to men, in case he should hate in­com­parably the far greatest part of men, and that with the hatred of a reprobation from eter­nity, leaving them without all pos­si­bility of escap­ing eter­nal mi­se­ry and tor­ment, and this, when as at the same cost and charge which he hath been at for the saving of a few, he might have pro­vided for the sal­va­tion of them all. For this they affirm who grant that Christ died suf­fi­ciently for all, but in­ten­tionally only for a few. Can we say that a king or prince is a lover of his kingdom or of his subjects, only be­cause he loves two or three fa­vourites about his court, es­pe­cially when the ge­nerality and great body of his subjects are in im­minent danger of perishing, or being un­done, unless he provides for their relief, and he in

the midst of the greatest abundance of means to relieve them, and this without the least prejudice or hinderance to himself, shall altogether neglect them in their danger and misery? Doubtless there was never prince or king, since the world began, that ever obtained the name or honour of “a lover of his subjects” upon such terms as these. And yet they make God a “lover of men” in no other sense, upon no whit better terms, who affirm and teach that he loved only that small number of men which they call “his elect,” (which the Scripture very frequently affirms to be “few”, in comparison of those who perish,) when as that great generality, and vast body of men, were, from the greatest to the least of them, in most imminent danger of being undone, and that in the most dreadful manner that can be imagined, to the days of eternity; teaching withal, that the death of Christ, which was bestowed upon these few only, was sufficient for the saving of the rest also; and that God, upon mere will and pleasure, not to ease his Son Jesus Christ in the least, nor to accommodate himself at all otherwise, implacably resolved from eternity to exclude all these from part and fellowship in that salvation. With a great desire my soul desireth, that men whose consciences serve them to oppose in the present controversy, would seriously and calmly consider, whether that GREEK, that love to mankind, which the Scripture reporteth to be in God, be at all compossible or consistent with such a dismal design in reference unto men as that now represented.

Again, if God loveth only such a small number of men as the opinion which we oppose supposeth, why is not *φιΧαγγῖα*, the love of angels, as well as *φιλανθρωπία*, the love of men, ascribed unto him? For doubtless if God loves no more men than those who come to he actually saved, he might more properly and truly be said to be *φλάγγιλος*, a lover of angels, rather than a lover of men. Because if we shall restrain his love towards men only to those comparative few who will be actually and eventually saved, he will be found to love a far greater proportion of angels than of men; it being no ways probable but that the number of angels who keep their standing and are elect is far greater, being compared with those that fell, than the number of men who, according to the Scriptures, are like to be actually saved, is, being compared with those that perish.

To say that God’s love, though but to a few men, expressed in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ to die for them, is more considerable and so a more reasonable ground of giving the denomination of *φλάνθρωπος* unto

him than the love which he bears to angels, though more in number or in proportion, is to say that which no way easeth the matter, or solveth the difficulty. First, because the angels, the elect angels, as the Scripture calleth them, are partakers with men in the gift of Jesus Christ given unto men, though not in that redemption from sin and misery which accrues unto men by him, unless haply it be by sympathy with their fellow-creatures in their joy and blessedness, yet otherwise, as appears from Col. 2:10, and other places; and besides is generally acknowledged by divines. Secondly, one of the highest expressions I remember, whereby the happiness procured for men by the gift of Christ is set forth in the Scripture, is hut *ἰσαγγελία*, an equality with the angels, or likeness of condition with them, Luke 20:36. Therefore God's love to the angels that stand doth not fall short, at least to any such considerable degree, of the love which he beareth unto men that are saved. Therefore the reason why he is styled *φιάνθρωπος*, a lover of men, not *φιάγγελος*, a lover of angels, is not because he loves some men more than he doth any angels, but because he loved all men and not all angels.

Besides, if God should love only such a small parcel of men as some imagine, with the hatred of all the rest, he might much more properly be termed *μισάνθρωπος*, a hater of men, than *φιάνθρωπος*, a lover of men. Whereas, the Scripture frequently extols and magnifies the love of God towards all men, yea, towards his enemies, on whom he maketh his sun to arise, and sendeth rain, as well as on his friends, Matt. 5:45, and strictly enjoineth all those that would be accounted his children to resemble and imitate him in this his goodness; but nowhere suggesteth the least degree of any hatred in him against any person of man, personally considered, nor any other than what doth redundare in personam, as the schoolmen speak, i. e. which redoundeth, and, as it were, runs over from the sin which he hateth unto the person in whom that sin is found.

Again, if God should not love the generality of mankind in order to their salvation by Christ, then all the good which he doth unto them in outward things, as in making his sun to arise and his rain to fall upon them, as our Saviour saith he doth upon the unjust as the just, and so his filling of their heart with food and gladness, with the like, must be conceived to be done by him upon such terms and with such intentions as men use to lay scraps for birds or bait hooks for fishes, which they do for

none other end but to take and destroy them. For if God hath no intent in these dispensations of his towards them to do them any good in a saving way, he must needs be conceived to intend their ruin and destruction, at least, the increase of their ruin and destruction by them; it being no ways reasonable to conceive but that he hath higher and more considerable ends propounded to himself in his providential administrations about men, in reference unto men, than about beasts, in relation unto them; though it is true he hath the same general and ultimate end, his glory, in all his works and administrations, one or other. But if the generality or far greatest part of men are bound to believe, and bound they are to believe it if it be a revealed truth, that God, in giving them health and peace and prosperity in the world, intends nothing but evil to them, a fuller cup of the wrath and vengeance which is to come, how can the "bountifulness and long-sufferance of God be said to lead men to repentance ?" which yet is the apostle's doctrine, Rom. 2:4. Neither the goodness nor patience of God towards evil men can be said to lead them to repentance but by the mediation or supposal of these three principles : 1. That these dispensations of God, I mean of goodness and patience, towards such men, are proper and sufficient, I mean by the help of that operation of the Spirit of God which always accompanieth them, to bring men to repentance; and, 2, that God's intent is that they should bring them actually to repentance, or at least that he hath no intention otherwise or to the contrary; 3, and lastly, that he truly and really intends their salvation upon their repentance. Wicked men can at no hand of reason, no, nor yet of common sense, be said to be led to repentance by the goodness or long-sufferance of God towards them, unless: 1, it be supposed that there is a genuine, natural, or proper rhetoric or moving tendency in them to persuade and encourage such men to repent, nothing can be said to lead a man to such or such an action or course, but that which is proper to invite or persuade him unto either. Nor unless it be supposed, 2, that God hath an intent that such men should be actually persuaded or made willing to repent by such dispensations, at least that he should have no intentions to the contrary. For how can any man be actually persuaded or made willing by any means, motive, or encouragement whatsoever to attempt or do any such thing which he hath cause to judge or believe *that* God's intentions stand against his doing or performance? 1 here is no motive or encouragement against the

determinate counsel of God made known. Nor 3, and lastly, Can the said dispensations of goodness or patience in God be said to lead any man to repentance, unless it be yet further supposed that his real intent and purpose is to save him upon his repentance, or in case he shall repent, or at least that they may be such. For what encouragement can any man have to repent, in case he hath sufficient ground to judge that God hath absolutely rejected him and will not save him, no, not upon his repentance? Therefore certainly God hath no intentions of evil, or of condemnation, or of increase of condemnation against the generality of men, no, nor yet against the worst or wickedest of men in those gracious vouchsafements of life, health, liberty, peace, food, raiment, and other the like temporal mercies and accommodations unto them.

Again, How can men look upon themselves as any ways debtors, or obliged unto God in thankfulness, for good things administered unto them with hard intentions, or with a purpose not to bless them, but to make their condemnation so much the greater, and more heavy upon them? If birds and fishes had understanding, and should know for what end, or with what intentions men lay scraps and baits, though made of such things as they love, and stand in need of, in their way, would they thank them for it, or should they have any reason so to do? Or had Amasa any cause to think the better of Joab, for “taking him by the heard with his right hand to kiss him ?” 2 Sam. 20:9. Or our Saviour to think the better of Judas, for the kiss wherewith he greeted him? Matt, 26:49.

Besides, it being the duty of the saints to imitate or resemble their heavenly Father, not only in his outward expressions, hut much more in his intentions, and frame of spirit towards men, when he doth good unto them, causing “his sun to arise, and his rain to fall upon them,” in case his intentions towards them in such applications of himself unto them, were bent, not upon their salvation, but destruction, would it not follow that when they should perform those Christian services unto them, enjoined by our Saviour himself, “ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you,” &c., Matt. 5:44, they were hound to do all these in order unto, and with an intent to procure, their greater and deeper condemnation, and not with any intent to gain them into the gospel? And if wicked men, enemies to the saints, should know, or have reasonable ground to judge, that when they express themselves outwardly in terms of love, and good-will towards them, they

mean them ruin, or increase of punishment and torment hereby, had they not cause to judge them the vilest hypocrites and dissemblers under heaven ? Nor do they represent the glorious God himself any whit better unto the world, who affirm and teach, that in and under his most pathetic and moving invitations, encouragements, and promissory offers of grace, mercy, salvation, unto the generality of men, whereof the Scriptures are full, he intends not the donation, or gift of grace, mercy, or salvation unto them, upon any condition or terms whatsoever, but wrath and judgment, and an opportunity to render them sevenfold more the children of death and condemnation, than otherwise they would or could have been.

Lastly, If God intends the increase of guilt and punishment unto wicked men, or the generality of men, in the comforts and good things of this world providentially disposed and dispensed unto them, he must needs desire the bringing or coming of these accordingly upon them. No man intends any thing in order to the accomplishment of such or such an end, but this end is desired by him. Again, certain it is that the increase of guilt and punishment cannot come upon men, by means, or by occasion, of the good things given by God unto them, but only by the intervening of their unthankfulness, and abuse of these good things, in one kind or other. Further, as there is no man but wisheth and desireth the coming to pass of such things, which are simply and absolutely necessary for the bringing to pass such things as he desireth, so hath no man cause to be offended with any man for the doing of such things, which are simply and absolutely necessary to the effecting of any such end which he desireth ; especially when his desire in this kind is raised and built upon foundations of righteousness and sound wisdom, which is not questionable in or about any of the desires of God. Now then, if God intends, he must needs also desire, the increase of guilt and punishment upon wicked men, or the generality of men; if he desires this, he hath no cause to be offended with these men, for their unthankfulness, or for any such abuse of his mercies or good things conferred upon them, without which it was impossible for him to attain his desired end, viz., an increase of guilt and condemnation upon them, as was asserted. The reason is, because, according to our late asserted principle, no man hath cause to be offended with another, for doing that which is directly and absolutely necessary for the bringing to pass of any such end, which is maturely, and

according to sound principles of wisdom and righteousness, projected and desired by him. Nor is there the least question to be made, but that if God intends and consequently desires, the increase of guilt and condemnation upon the generality of men, both his intentions and desires in this kind are most regular, in respect of all regularity, that either wisdom or righteousness can give unto them.

Nor will it much, if any thing at all, here help to say that though God doth not intend the salvation of the generality of men in giving unto them the good things of this life to enjoy so abundantly, as for the most part he doth, but the increase of their guilt and condemnation, yet inasmuch as no particular man knoweth but that God may intend his spiritual good and salvation, in such dispensations, all are bound to conceive this hope of themselves, and consequently every man stands bound to be thankful unto God for what he receiveth from him in this kind, and to seek more after him. And if any man shall be found neglective of what is his duty herein, or shall turn the grace of God, towards him, even in these outward things, into wantonness, and not into thankfulness, he deserves to be punished so much the more severely for it. For to this,

I answer: No man stands bound to believe that, or to conceive hope of that which he hath no sufficient ground of believing, or why he should believe it: much less to believe that which he hath much more reason to question or doubt of, than to believe. Solomon informeth us, that it is the property of “a fool to believe every thing,” (or every word,) Prov. 14:15, viz., as well that which he hath no ground or reason to believe, as that which he hath. And it is commonly said and taught amongst us, that in matters of religion and of salvation, nothing ought to be believed by any man, hut what he hath a sufficient ground in or from the word of God to believe. If so, if no man ought to believe, in matters appertaining to salvation, but what he hath a ground or warrant in the word of God to believe; much less ought he to believe any such thing, the truth whereof the word of God administers much more ground to doubt, question, and suspect than to believe. So that if this be a truth revealed in the word of God, that God doth not intend the spiritual good of the generality, or of far the greatest part of men, in their outward mercies and good things, but. the contrary ; certain it is that every particular man, at least, that hath no sufficient proof, of his regeneration, hath ten, twenty, if not an hundred times more reason to doubt and question, whether his spiritual

good be intended by God, or no, in the things we speak of, than to believe that it is intended. As in the business of a lottery, where there are forty, it may be a hundred blanks for one prize, no man hath so much reason or ground to hope, that he shall draw a prize, in case he should adventure his money this way, as that he shall draw a blank. And upon this account, lotteries have still been accounted little better than cheats, or unworthy devices contrived gin-wise, to catch the money of simple and inconsiderate people, men of understanding easily discerning the fraud, and so keeping their foot out of the snare. And whether that doctrine, which teacheth that God intendeth only the salvation of a few, but the condemnation of many, and yet commandeth all to believe that they may be saved, doth not make the glorious gospel of God like unto one of such lotteries, I leave to all understanding and unprejudiced men to consider.

In the meantime, evident it is that this opinion, that Christ died not for all men, but for some few only, is, as it were, calculated, and the face of it bent and set, to make the distance between heaven and earth, between God and his creature man, greater and wider than yet it is ; to multiply jealousies and hard thoughts in the hearts and minds of men and women concerning God, where they are more than apt enough to engender and multiply, without the irritation of such a doctrine. Yea, whereas God hath put himself into his Christ, ("God was in Christ," saith the apostle, as we heard formerly, Chap. 5., "reconciling the world unto himself,") that by the means of him, and by the tender and promise of forgiveness of sins unto men through him, upon the gracious terms of believing he might prevail with the world to love him, to think well and honourably of him; this doctrine seeks to put him out of his Christ again, at least in reference to any such glorious design as that of reconciling the world unto him; yea, and saith, in effect, unto the world itself, Believe him not, though he speaketh ever so graciously unto you: when he promiseth you life and salvation upon the fairest and freest terms, he hath war in his heart against you, and intendeth to destroy you.

If it be yet objected, that, upon the same ground, no particular person should have any particular ground or reason to believe that he is one of those that shall be saved, inasmuch as the number of those that shall be saved is affirmed to be but small; I answer,

True it is, no man is bound to believe, simply and absolutely, that he is one of those that shall be saved, but conditionally only, viz. in case he



shall believe, and persevere believing unto the end. All that a man is bound to believe in this kind positively is, that he is one of those that may be saved; and the doctrine asserted by us, viz. that Christ died for all men without exception, administereth a fair ground and full footing for such a faith as this unto every man; whereas the doctrine opposite hereunto, which affirmeth that Christ died for the elect only, leaveth no foundation or ground at all of this faith unto any man whatsoever, at least being yet in his natural condition, and unconverted. For, 1, if only those men be in a possibility of being saved for whom Christ died; and, 2, if Christ died for the elect only; and, 3, if no unregenerate or unconverted person hath any ground to believe that he is one of God's elect; it roundly follows, and with pregnancy of consequence, that no such person (I mean, who is yet unconverted,) hath any sufficient ground to believe that he is one of those that may be, or that is in a possibility of being saved. All the said hypotheses or premises, (as, viz. 1. That no man is in a possibility of being saved, but only those for whom Christ died; 2: That Christ died only for the elect; and, 3. That no unregenerate person hath any sufficient ground to believe that he is one of the elect,) are authentic and unquestionable, according to the known principles of our adversaries; therefore the conclusion specified must be admitted and owned by them. If they will admit the said conclusion, and judge it no way prejudicial, either to themselves or their cause, so to do, I would demand of them what foundation of encouragement they can lay to persuade unregenerate men either to "strive to enter in at the strait gate," to "labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life," or to apply themselves, seriously and effectually, in one kind or other, to the means of believing. We know that without hope, or an apprehended possibility of obtaining what is endeavoured and sought after, all motives or grounds of persuasion unto action amount to no more than to the beating of the air: the hearts of men are not at all taken or wrought by them. Despair of salvation quencheth all thoughts, all endeavours, all desires of believing ; therefore, if an unregenerate person hath no sufficient ground of hope that he is one of those who are so much as in a possibility of being saved, he is not capable of any impressions from any ground or motive whatsoever to believing.

If it he here said, Though an unregenerate person hath no sufficient ground of hope that he is one of God's elect, and consequently, that Christ died for him, yet he hath sufficient ground of hope that he *may be* one of

these, and so that there is a possibility that Christ *may* have died for him; and upon the account of such a hope as this, he hath encouragement sufficient to apply himself to the means of believing; I answer,

1. That such a hope, which amounts only, or very little more than, to a bare apprehended possibility of obtaining, hath but a very feeble and faint influence upon the heart of a considering man, by way of encouragement unto action, especially unto such action which is of a laborious and difficult import, and wherein he must deny himself in matters of ease, pleasure, profit, &c., and this to an eminent degree. Now, it is generally known, that that action or course of engagement wherein they must labour and exercise themselves who desire to believe unto salvation, is of such an import as we speak of: it is a course of action wherein men must put forth or give out themselves “with all their heart, and with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength,” wherein they must labour, strive, watch, and pray continually, deny themselves, crucify the old man, &c., or otherwise not expect salvation.

2. Neither is it so clear a truth, especially according to the principles of those against whom we now argue, that an unregenerate man hath a sufficient ground of hope that he may be one of the elect; for if he be not at present one of these, there is no possibility, according to the said principles, that ever he should be such. If it be replied, that the meaning of this assertion, a regenerate man has a sufficient ground of hope that he may be one of the elect, is not that he may be one of these hereafter, whether he be one of them at present or no, but that he may be one of them at the present; I answer, that hope, in propriety of import, respecteth not what is or may be at present, but what may be, or is like to be in the future. Nor do I remember any instance throughout the Scriptures where they make or suppose any other object of hope, but only that which is or may be future; nor that any definition of hope given by learned divines assigneth any other; so that it is very improper, at least, to say, that an unregenerate man hath ground of hope that he maybe, at present, one of God’s elect. But,

3. A little to indulge impropriety of terms, I demand whether the Scriptures do not constantly represent and make unregeneracy, or an unbelieving condition, especially joined with an habitual practice of known sins, a ground of fear that a man is not at present one of the elect of God; or rather, whether they do not make such a condition a ground of

certain knowledge that a man is not at present one of the elect of God? According to the principles of the adverse party in the question in hand, all the elect shall certainly be saved, and inherit the kingdom of God; but the Scriptures constantly teach and affirm, that unbelievers and unregenerate men, especially living in known sins, “ shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” as we have in the two next preceding chapters shown at large; therefore, unless we shall say that the Scriptures are divided in themselves, it is impossible to show or prove that they anywhere exhibit or afford any ground of hope to such unregenerate and unbelieving persons as we now speak of, that they may be, at present, the elect of God. The Scripture nowhere excludes the elect of God from salvation, but everywhere asserts them as heirs hereof; therefore, those whom it excludes from part and fellowship in this business, are not, at least in Scripture sense, nor, indeed, in any sense consistent with reason, the elect of God.

4. If such unregenerate persons as we speak of have any sufficient ground to hope that they *may* be, at present, the elect of God, then have they the like ground of hope that they *are* at present of this number, and the elect of God. The reason of this sequel is plain; because what a man is, and what he may be at present, are one and the same; it being impossible that he should be at present any thing besides, or any other than what he is at present, no subject whatsoever being capable of any otherness or alteration in an instant; according to that known maxim in natural philosophy, *Motus non fit in instanti*, No motion can be in an instant of time; as also that other, *Quicquid est, quando est, necesse est esse*; *i. e.* whatsoever is, whilst it is, must of necessity be (that which it is.) Therefore he that hath ground to hope that he *may be* one of God’s elect at present, hath ground, yea, the same ground, to hope that he *is* such an one at present. Now if such an unregenerate man as hath been oft mentioned hath a sufficient ground of hope that he is at present one of God’s elect, then have the generality of wicked and unregenerate men, respectively, a sufficient ground of hope that they are all, and every person of them, the elect of God. For if any one of this sort of persons hath a sufficient ground of hope in this kind, then have they all and every one the same; for no ground of difference between them in this case is imaginable. But how ill it accords with sundry the grounds and principles of our adversaries to affirm, That all the world, which, as John saith, lieth

in wickedness, should have sufficient ground of hope that they are the elect of God, I leave to themselves to consider. Therefore certainly no unregenerate person, such especially as we lately described, hath any sufficient ground of hope that he is at present one of the elect of God; and consequently, the doctrine we oppose for denying that Christ died for all men without exception, leaveth no place or ground of any such hope unto unregenerate persons which is likely to engage or provoke them unto any gospel inquiry or addressment of themselves to the means of believing; no, nor yet which leaves them in any capacity of being wrought or persuaded hereunto, by any other motives or inducements whatsoever.

5, and lastly, In case unregenerate men should, by the leave and sufferance of the said doctrine, be under any such hope as it asserts unto them, (I mean that they may be the elect of God in that sense of the word elect, which the patrons of this doctrine commonly put upon it,) yet would not this hope be apt or likely to animate or encourage them to such applications of themselves as those specified, no nor yet suffer them to be much affected with or wrought upon in this kind by any other motives or means of excitement whatsoever. The reason hereof hath been formerly given, where we showed and proved that such a hope which hath certainty of success or attainment absolutely and unconditionally insured unto it, is not of that kind of hope which is likely to engage much unto action; I here add, and have added, That the very genius or import of it is rather to render the subject of it unengageable unto action by other motives. And thus we clearly see, by a thorough examination and debate of the whole business, that the doctrine of our present contest, and which denieth that Christ died for all men, leaveth no ground of hope for any person whatsoever in his natural condition, that he either is or may be one of those, who are in any possibility of being saved by Christ: and consequently must needs be a doctrine anti-evangelical in the highest. This for the opening and asserting of the philanthropy of God avouched in the Scriptures. "When the apostle writeth thus to the Hebrews, " For if we sin willingly after we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth *no more sacrifice* for sins," Heb. 10:26, he clearly supposeth, that they, for whose sins there was an expiatory sacrifice offered by Christ, may by apostasy and a rejection of the grace of this sacrifice, reduce themselves to such a condition, wherein they shall be incapable of any atonement for sin by any sacrifice whatsoever. For this clause, "there

remaineth *no more* sacrifice for sins,” evidently implieth, 1. That before the horrid sin of apostasy, here spoken of, the persons that fall into it, have, or had, a sacrifice for their sins, viz., for the expiation and atonement of them, which can be no other but the sacrifice of the death of Christ. In saying “there remaineth no more” (or, *οὐκ* in, not still, or, not further,) a sacrifice for sins, he must of necessity suppose, that till that sad alteration in their spiritual estate here described by their sinning wilfully after, &c. should befall them, they were partakers of a sacrifice for the expiation of their sins, which, as hath been said, must needs be the death of Christ; otherwise they should have been in no worse case, as to matter of receiving benefit by the death or sacrifice of Christ, after their apostasy than before. 2. That upon, and after this alteration, they are, either absolutely and altogether excluded from a re-admission into their former grace, whereby they were partakers of the sacrifice of Christ, or at least that they stand upon terms of extreme difficulty ever to obtain such a re-admission. So that this passage of Scripture befriendeth both the main doctrines avouched in the first part of our discourse, with pregnancy of confirmation, respectively. For, 1. It supposeth that Christ offered the sacrifice of himself for the sins of those, who very possibly may never be saved by him, and consequently, for all men without exception, for concerning those that come to be saved by him, there is no question. And 2. That they who have been partakers of the sacrifice of Christ, and hereby of the grace and favour of God, in the pardon of their sins, may afterwards apostatise into such a condition wherein “there remains no more sacrifice for their sins, hut a certain looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation,” &c. Calvin himself knew not, it seems, how to manage the place, but with full comport of the sense given. “There is a great difference,” saith he upon the place, “between particular fellings and such a universal defection, whereby it cometh to pass that we *wholly fall away* from the grace of Christ. But because this cannot befall any man, but him who is enlightened, therefore he saith, If we sin willingly after we have received the knowledge of the truth: as if he should say, Who shall willingly *cast away that grace which he had obtained*” A little after, “He (the apostle) denies that any sacrifice remains for those, who *depart from the death of Christ*, which is not done by any particular delinquency, but by a *casting away of faith totally*.” Doubtless, they who depart from the death of Christ, were sometimes at it, (*i. e.* partakers of

it,) and they who cast away faith totally, sometimes had it. And long before Calvin, Chrysostom had declared for the substance of the interpretation given. "That which the apostle saith," saith he upon the place, "is some such thing as this: Thou hast been cleansed, thou hast been discharged from matter of crime, or accusation against thee, thou hast been made a son: if now, thou shalt return to thy former vomit, disinheritor, fire, and all such like (terrible) things abide thee; for there is not a second sacrifice" for thee. We shall, upon the account of this chapter, produce only one brief passage of Scripture more, wherein the gracious intentions of God towards all men in point of salvation by the death of Christ, are like Solomon's "king upon his throne, against whom there is no rising up." The entire verse, wherein the words we mind are extant, runneth thus: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," 2 Pet. 3:9. Evident it is, and expositors generally consent, that the apostle in these words propounds a further reason or consideration to satisfy those that, being weak, were apt to stumble and take offence, that the Lord Christ delayed his coming to judge the world and to deliver his saints so long. No man, saith the apostle in effect upon this account, hath any reason to be offended or take it amiss at the hand of Christ that he makes no more haste in coming to judge the world, seeing that his delay in this kind proceeds not at all from any neglect or backwardness in him to perform his promise in that behalf, (though some men count all delay which is contrary to their minds and desires, to be no better than neglect or slackness unto action,) but from his great patience and long-sufferance towards men; his will and desire being that no person whatsoever of mankind, either in present being in the world, or that shall be born hereafter, should perish everlastingly, hut that every man of them should come to repentance, whereunto his patience and long-sufferance inviteth, yea, and "leadeth them," Rom. 2:4; and by which many axe actually led and brought unto it, that so they may be saved. From the passage thus understood, I argue thus: If Christ he not willing that any man should perish, hut that all should come to repentance, then questionless he intendeth the salvation of all, and consequently died intentionally for all; for unless he intended to die for them, yea, and did die for them, it is not possible that he should either will or intend their salvation, inasmuch as

no man can will or intend that which he knows to be impossible: But certain it is that Christ is not willing that any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance, the Holy Ghost, in the Scripture in hand, expressly affirming it: Ergo.

Against the sense and interpretation of the words given, and so to the invalidating of the argument built thereon, it is pretended by some that the apostle doth not here assert an unwillingness in Christ that any person whatsoever of mankind should perish, but only that any person of the elect should perish. To give colour to this exposition, they circumscribe the particle or pronoun *ἡμᾶς*, “us,” with the limit or line of their election, so carrying the sense thus: “The Lord is not slack,” &c. . . . “but is long-suffering to us-ward,” viz. who are his elect, and consequently to all others that are partakers of the same election with ns, “not willing that any,” viz. of these, the elect of his Father, “should perish, but that all” these “should come to repentance,” not any others. This sense of the place is commended by Estius, a Popish expositor; but we shall find Calvin leaning with the truth another way. “So, then, Peter,” saith Estius upon the place, “saith that the Lord dealeth patiently, *i. e.* delayeth his promised coming and judgment for the elect’s sake, that they might not perish, but, being converted to repentance, be saved.”

This exposition he labours in the very fire to make to stand; but, as one said in another case, “Oportet aliquid intus esse,” an exposition that hath not truth in it, cannot be made to stand.

1. I would demand of this expositor, and of those who sense with him in the interpretation specified, why, or by what authority, they expound *τὴν ἡμᾶς*, “towards us” the elect, rather than “towards us” believers? For if they will needs have the persons here spoken unto to be considered by the apostle not in their natures or general capacities, viz. as they were men, but in some particular or special capacity wherein other men or all men did not partake with them, the capacity of saintship or of faith was as near at hand as that of election. For that the persons we speak of were saints and believers, is far less questionable than that they were elect, in their sense of the word election, who thus interpret. It is true what Estius allegeth to credit his exposition, that this epistle was written to the same persons with the former, who are styled “elect,” 1 Pet. 1:2. But, 1. Whether his “elect” and the apostle’s “elect” be the same, is very questionable; unless, haply, the apostle puts it out of the question that they are not the

same, by setting forth his “elect,” in the place cited, by such a description which will not agree with Estius's “elect.” Estius, with the generality of divines amongst us, by his “elect” understands as well those that shall repent and believe hereafter, though they be at present “sons of Belial,” and “to every good work reprobate,” as the apostle speaketh, as those who actually do believe: whereas Peter, in the place now mentioned, estimateth his *elect* by “the sanctification,” *i.e.* the actual sanctification “of the Spirit unto obedience,, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the foreknowledge,” or pre-approbation, “of God;” *i. e.* as God approved and judged it meet, and consequently decreed from eternity to regulate his election of men in time. But this only by the way for as to this Scripture, with others which treat of election, we shall, God favouring, speak more fully in due time. 2. Though the epistle was, as this author allegeth, written to the same persons with the former, who in the beginning of the said former epistle are termed “elect,” yet are these persons, in this very epistle, and much nearer to the place in hand, described or considered in their capacity of believing: “Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious *faith* with us,” 2 Pet. 1:1, &c. So that, in this respect, there is much more reason why, in the place in question, he should speak unto them, or consider them, as believers with himself, than as “elect with himself, in such a notion of election wherein “elect are distinguished from believers, as was lately declared. But now to make the apostle to say that God is patient towards us, *believers*, “not willing that any” of us who *believe* “should perish, but that all” *we* “should come to repentance,” is to make him speak beneath the line of common sense. For, 1. The patience of God towards believers, who are in a present capacity of salvation, and according to the principles of our adversaries, out of all possibility of perishing, is no means of their non-perishing: neither need he be patient towards them in reference to any such end. 2. Neither have these need to “come to repentance” in order to their non-perishing, unless we shall suppose them in a possibility of a total loss of that faith that is in them, yea, and that they will de facto totally lose it.

2. That the apostle doth not, in the place in hand, speak of the Christians to whom he writes as they were “elect,” in the common sense of the word, appears from hence, viz. because, in case there were any “elect” in this sense, the patience of God towards them would be no argument or sign of



his non-willing their perishing, or of his willing that they should “come to repentance because he shows the same, or greater patience, towards such persons who are not “elect,” in' that sense, and who never come to believe or repent.

3. The Lord is not here said to be “not willing that any” of the elect “should perish,” or, “but that all” these “should come to repentance,” but simply and indefinitely, “that any should perish,” *μή βουλόμινός τινας ἀπολίσθαι* - and universally, “but that all, *πάντας*, should come to repentance.” Now, these indefinite particles, *τις*, *τινίς*, as likewise these universale, *πάντες*, do frequently in Scripture (we shall not need to cite places, being so numerous and obvious) signify men, simply and absolutely considered; the former partitively, distributively and sometimes interrogatively; the latter universally; but no instance, I presume, can be found, where either the one or the other signifies men in any special capacity, or under any particular consideration, unless, haply, it be where such capacity or consideration is either in the same period, or else in the same contexture of speech, and near at hand, particularly mentioned and expressed. Now concerning the place in debate, certain it is, that the capacity or consideration of “election” is not only not at all mentioned or specified in the same period, nor yet in the same passage or contexture of Scripture, or any where near at hand, but not so much as in all the epistle from first to last. Therefore, doubtless, *τινάς*, “any,” and *πάντας*, “all,” do not here signify any of the “elect,” and all the “elect,” but any men, and all men.

4. Neither can God, in any tolerable construction or propriety of speech or sense, be said to be patient or “long-suffering” towards those whom he loves with the greatest love that is, and this unchangeable, (for such is the love of election supposed by those against whom we argue to be,) especially if it be supposed withal, (which these men suppose likewise,) that though they be wicked, yet they cannot repent, cannot cease to be wicked, until God comes with a strong and irresistible hand to cause them to repent. For when we ardently and affectionately love a person, one or more, we cannot reasonably be said to be patient towards them, though we do not punish them for such miscarriages or actions wherein they are prejudicial unto us, in case we know it to have been impossible for them to forbear such actions, unless we ourselves had effectually restrained them from them. It would not argue any patience in a parent towards his

young infant, which he tenderly loves, to forbear correcting it, in case it should let fall and break a Venice glass, or some like brittle commodity, which were put into the hand of it. Patience, we know, is a grace, or virtue, whereby a man is enabled and disposed to moderate the natural passion of anger, and to prevent the exorbitant and undue motions of it. So that patience hath no place or opportunity to express itself, but only in such cases wherein this passion is apt to be stirred and provoked. Now the passion we speak of, anger, is not apt to be raised or provoked, but only by such actions wherein or whereby we apprehend either ourselves, or some nearly relating to us, to be neglected or despised, according to the philosopher's discourse and description of it, wherein he mentions *ολιγωρία*, the neglect or contempt of a person, or of some related to him, as always the cause of it; which description, if need were, we might show to be very agreeable to what the Scriptures themselves deliver concerning the same passion. So then, in case there be no ground or reason upon which God can judge himself, or any of his, neglected or despised, by the impenitency of his "elect" in their sinful ways, whilst they continue in them, he cannot be said to be patient or "long-suffering towards them, though he forbears to punish them with death for it. Now when that only is done by a man, which he is, either in one kind or other, necessitated to do, and cannot possibly refrain the doing it, no person whatsoever, what damage soever he may receive by what is done upon such terms, hath any; sufficient ground to judge himself, or any of his, neglected or despised in such an action, nor consequently to be provoked unto anger by it.

5. Neither can the "elect," in such a sense as many call elect, truly or reasonably "account the long-suffering of the Lord salvation" unto them, which yet the persons here spoken of and to are in the sequel of this chapter enjoined to do, "And account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, ver. 15 ; for they have salvation infallibly and infrustrably, against and above "death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, every creature" whatsoever, ascertained, assigned, or designed, by the irrevocable decree of God unto them, stand in no need of any respite or reprieve from death through the "long-sufferance" of God, in order to the obtainment of salvation. Because, in case they should die, either the first moment that they are born into the world, or after never so much sin committed, yet

the decree of God concerning their salvation, being peremptory, absolute, and irresistible, must needs take place, and produce their Salvation, against all obstructions and impediments whatsoever.

Therefore, as a man hath no reason to set any such high price upon a receipt prescribed unto him by a physician, in order to his health, as to call it “his *life*,” or the emphatical means of his preservation, in case his life would certainly have been preserved without it; so neither have the “elect” any competent reason or ground to call or “count the long-suffering of the Lord” towards them “*salvation*,” (*i. e.* a signal means or opportunity of salvation to them,) in cash this their salvation might, and certainly should, have been obtained by them, or conferred on them, whether any such “long-suffering” had been vouchsafed unto them or no. If it be said, That as the salvation of the saints is infallibly decreed, so is it with the like infallibility decreed to be effected by the “long-sufferance” of God towards them, as the means and opportunity thereof, and in this respect they may properly enough be required to “count,” or esteem, the “long-suffering” of God towards them “salvation I answer, If the decree of God concerning the salvation of the saints be absolute and infallible, in the sense asserted and contended for by our opposers, then cannot the execution of this decree, the actual saving of the saints, be suspended upon any fallible or contingent condition, such as is the saints’ accounting the long-sufferance of God to be salvation to them, or their managing this long-suffering of his in due order to their salvation; no more than the standing or continuance of a house, that is well and strongly built upon a rock, depends upon those weak or rotten shores or props which are applied unto it to support it. Nor can God be said absolutely and infallibly to decree the coming to pass of such things, which are essentially in themselves, and in their own natures, contingent, it being a maxim generally granted by our adversaries themselves, That the decrees of God have no real influence upon their objects, or things decreed, at least no such which altereth their natures, or essential properties of their beings. It is a common saying amongst them, that *praedestinatio nihil ponit in praedestinato*, *i. e.* predestination putteth nothing in or into either the thing or person predestinated. And if predestination putteth nothing in or into the things or persons predestinated, there is no reason to judge that any other of his decrees doth any whit more. And if the decrees of God relating unto contingent events should have any such influx upon them,

which alters their natures, and changeth the fundamental laws of their beings, transforming them into things absolutely necessary, or necessary with any such necessity which is unavoidable, contingency would be only a name, or matter of mere speculation, God having, with the same infallibility and absoluteness of decree, as say our adversaries, decreed things contingent and things necessary, and consequently made all things, as to matter of event and coming to pass, necessary. So that the salvation of the saints is not absolutely decreed by God to be effected by his long-suffering towards them: nor could this long-suffering be reasonably by them accounted salvation, in case their salvation were so absolutely decreed unto them, as our contrary-minded brethren suppose. Therefore,

6, and lastly, When the apostle saith, that “the Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, hut that all,” &c. his meaning must needs be, that he is long-suffering towards men, simply and indefinitely considered, or towards mankind ; and that this long-suffering of his towards them, proceeds out of a gracious and merciful disposition in him, which inclineth him not to will or desire the destruction of any person or soul of them, hut that they may generally, one and other, by the advantage and opportunity of his goodness and long-sufferance towards them, be so overcome, as to repent unfeignedly of their sins, and turn unto him, that they may be saved. This interpretation,

1. Perfectly accords with the words, in their genuine, proper, and best known significations: whereas the other, as we lately proved, requires such a sense and signification of the two particles, *τινάς*, and *πάντας*, any and all, wherein they are not to be found throughout the Scriptures.

2. The series and story of the context falls in much more genuinely and fairly with this than with that other interpretation; the scope of the words being, as we formerly likewise showed, to vindicate the delay which the Lord Christ maketh, in not performing his promise of coming to judgment with so much celerity and expedition, as some conceive it meet that he should perform it, from any pretence or plea, that can in a way of reason render it offensive unto any man. Now, look, out of how much the greater, richer, and larger mercy and goodness towards the poor children of men, this delay of his shall be found to proceed, and by how much greater the number of those are, whose benefit and blessedness shall appear to be intended by it and concerned in it, it must needs be

conceived to be proportionably so much the further off from being any just matter of offence unto any man, than it would be in case it should be occasioned by any straitness of bowels, or the good intended by it be conceived to relate only to a few.

3. The sense of the words and place, which this interpretation exhibiteth, is more clearly parallel, and consistent with the mind of the Holy Ghost in other Scriptures, than that which is issued by the other. The Scripture nowhere, or at least nowhere so much, commendeth the patience or long-sufferance of God determinately towards his elect, or towards believers, in reference to their repentance or salvation, as towards the generality of men, and more especially towards those that are wicked and ungodly. “But we are sure,” saith the apostle Paul, “that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth *thee* to repentance. But *thou*,” &c. Rom. 2:2—4. And God himself, by his prophet Ezekiel, speaketh thus to the wicked and stiff-necked Jews in general: “Turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.” And further, “For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I Have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye,” Ezek. 18:30—32. And elsewhere by the same prophet: “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, hut that the wicked turn from his ways and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Ezek. 33:11. Our apostle himself, speaking of the wicked generation of the old world, and of God’s patience towards them, saith thus: “Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,” &c. 1 Pet. 3:20. Not to multiply places, that of the apostle Paul, formerly opened, is of much affinity with the words in hand: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 2 Tim. 2:4. In all these passages, unto which many more of like import might readily have been added, the gracious intendments of God in his patience, towards the generality of men, and more especially towards the wicked, are very emphatically asserted, and this by way of encouragement and invitation unto them to repent, that so they might be

saved. But concerning any such intentions of God in his patience, determinately towards believers, or his elect, I find the Scriptures silent .altogether.

4, and lastly, The sense of the Scripture in hand contended for is attested by Mr. Calvin himself, over and over. “The apostle,” saith he, “checketh the too much and preposterous haste” that some made “by another reason, viz. because the Lord doth therefore defer his coming, that” hereby “he may invite all mankind” or the whole of mankind “unto repentance.” A little after, thus: “And indeed there is the same consideration to be had, of the duration of the whole world, which there is of every man’s life in particular. For God, by affording” or enlarging “time to every *particular man*, forbeareth them till they may” or that they may “repent. So, likewise, he makes no haste of putting an end unto the world, that he may give unto *all men* a space to repent.” Aretius in his brief commentary upon the place, compares it, for sense and import, with three of those four texts lately cited, viz., Rom. 2., Ezek. 18., 1 Tim. 2:4, in all which, as we observed, the patience of God towards the generality of men, or towards sinful men, in order to their repentance and salvation hereupon, is clearly avouched. but not the least mention or intimation of any confinement or appropriation of this his patience, or intendments either of repentance or salvation therein, unto righteous men, or his elect. Therefore, questionless, this orthodox author also correspondeth with us in the interpretation given. Dr. Ames upon the place acknowledged, that “the patience of God in its own nature hath this use and end, viz., to allure” or invite “sinners unto repentance: Rom. 2:4. And in this sense,” he granteth that “their exposition may be admitted, who understand these words, and the like, of all and every particular man.” But whereas he adds that “the apostle in this place particularly respected the elect,” and for proof saith that he speaks of the elect, ver. 8, and numbereth himself with those of whom he speaketh: we answer briefly, 1. That he doth not speak, ver. 8, of the elect, as such, or in their capacity of election, but only styles those, to whom he there speaks, beloved ; which only imports his affection towards them, as they were saints, or believers, or rather as they were so judged by him. 2. Whereas he numbers himself with those to whom and of whom he speaketh, it no ways proveth or supposeth that he numbereth himself in respect of his election, with them, or of his saintship, especially considering that he speaketh not,

either to them or of them, as they were elect, as we have proved at large in the traverse of the words. And whereas he grants, that “the patience of God, hath in its own nature this use and end, that it allures” or draws “sinners to repentance doth he conceive, that this nature of it is altered or changed for the worse, by any intentions of God, in respect of what sinners soever ? Or doth he think that God dissolveth or destroyeth the proper operativeness or tendency of any of his dispensations, in order, either to procure the perpetration of more sin in the world, or to the extenuation of the demerit or punishment of men who live and die impenitent and obdurate in their sins? Or is there any other end imaginable, but only one, or both of these, why the patience of God, which in its own nature, hath this use and end, to draw sinners to repentance, should be divested of them by God?

But against the exposition given, and maintained, some things are objected. First, If the Lord Christ should defer his coming, or be patient towards all men without exception, in order to their repentance, that so they may not perish, he must defer it for ever, and so never come; inasmuch as that day will never come, wherein all men will repent.

To this I answer, That it is neither the sense of the text, nor yet of the interpretation given, that Christ should be patient unto all men, or defer his coming until all men without exception should actually repent; but that his intent and desire in his patience towards all men, is that they should repent and be saved, and that he doth by his patience and long-suffering towards all men, afford unto them means and opportunities sufficient to bring them all to repentance. How such intentions and desires in God and in Christ, which are real and cordial, may yet very possibly never take place, or be fulfilled, hath been shown, in part, formerly, and remains to be further opened in convenient place.

Another objection levied by some against the interpretation avouched, which yet in part falls in with the former, and is already fallen with it, is this: If Christ certainly knows, knoweth beforehand, that all men without exception will not repent, or will not be saved, how can it be thought that he should will, intend, or desire, that they should repent or that they should be saved? Doth any sober man will, or intend such a thing, which he certainly knows beforehand will never be effected ?

To this sufficient answer hath been given in the premises, where we delivered this for a general rule, to direct to a right understanding of

Scripture anthropopathies, and attributions of human things unto God; viz. “ That it is not necessary that all things accompanying, or relating unto those affections or impressions in men, which are attributed unto God, should be paralleled in him, or have something in his nature corresponding to them: but that it is a sufficient ground or reason for the attribution, in case the human affection or impression attributed to him, be, in respect of any one particular, appertaining to it in men, paralleled, or analogised, in the nature of God.” Which rule I explain in the place referred unto by several instances. From hence it follows, though sober men never intend, or will, what they certainly know beforehand will never come to pass, that yet God may, and so Christ, without any reflexion of disparagement unto him in the least, intend and will what he certainly foreknoweth, in such a sense as foreknowledge is appropriable unto him, of which formerly, will never come to pass. The reason is, because intentions, and acts of willing, which are properly and formally in men, and not in God, are not attributed unto God, in all, or every respect, or in respect of all circumstances, which relate unto them in men, but in respect only of such productions or effects, as they ordinarily produce in men. As for example, when men will or intend such or such a thing, if the act of their will in this case be raised to any considerable strength or height of willing, they engage themselves in the use of such means, for the effecting of what they intend, or will, in this kind, which they judge competent and sufficient hereunto. In like manner God in propriety of Scripture language, is said to intend, and will, the repentance and salvation of men, because he vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto them to effect their repentance and salvation hereupon, And chargeth them from heaven to use these means accordingly. And inasmuch as he vouchsafeth this sufficiency of means unto, and imposeth the charge we speak of upon, all men without exception, he may upon good grounds be said to intend or will the repentance and salvation of all without exception. It is a common saying amongst all expositors of Scripture, as well Protestant as Popish, that “*humana transferuntur in Deum, non affective, sed effective:*” *i. e.* human passions or affections, are ascribed unto God, not by way of affect, but effect; *i.e.* not because the affections themselves are in him, but because there proceed such effects from him, which are like unto the effects that flow from such affections in men.

If it be here demanded; but if God certainly foreseeeth, or foreknoweth



that the means and opportunities which he vouchsafeth unto men, to bring them to repentance and so to salvation, will miscarry, and never take effect, but turn to so much the greater condemnation of those, to whom they are vouchsafed, can any vouchsafement of such means and opportunities as these unto men be interpreted, or looked upon, as proceeding from any love or grace in him towards such persons, who he certainly knows beforehand will reject them ? or as any ways obliging such persons unto thankfulness ? If I certainly knew that the gift of a hundred pounds unto my son, or friend, would turn to some sad inconvenience unto them, as to the destruction of their lives, to the bereaving of them of their wits, or the like, would it be matter of love, kindness, or respect in me towards them, to give it unto them? or should I not deal more kindly by them, not to give it in such a case ? To this I answer,

1. When God vouchsafeth unto men things which are in themselves and in their natures good, beneficial, and of worthy concernment unto men, and they who receive them very capable of employing them accordingly, he no ways hindering them from making an answerable use of them, but many ways encouraging, persuading, and pressing them hereunto, is there any reason or colour of a reason why he should be thought less gracious or loving to such men, only because he knows beforehand that they will make no such use of them ? Or would the same or the like vouchsafements from him savour of any whit the more grace, love, or goodness, in case it could or should he supposed that he were ignorant what use such men would make of them, or whether they would convert them to their destruction or no ? Or is there any reason that the knowledge of God should be turned to the prejudice or disparagement of his goodness?

2. As he certainly foresees that some men *will* turn his grace into wantonness and render themselves liable to the greater condemnation by the abuse of those means which he vouchsafeth unto them for their salvation, so he as certainly knows and foreseeth likewise, that they *may* do otherwise if they please, I mean improve these means to the obtaining of salvation, that his foresight of what they *will* do notwithstanding. For the foreknowledge which is in God of what men *will* do neither imposeth nor supposeth any absolute necessity of their doing it ; neither have they ever a whit the less liberty or power to refrain from doing it, because of

God's foreknowledge that they *will* do it. Nor would they have ever a whit the more liberty or power to refrain an action or course in case it should be supposed that God doth not certainly foresee what they will do on either hand, refrain, or act and practise. So that God is never the less gracious unto men in his vouchsafement of sufficient means of salvation unto them, because he foresees they will abuse them. But,

3, and lastly, I answer further, that there is not the same consideration of God and of men in respect of such actions or gifts, the issue or consequence whereof, the one and the other are or may be said to foresee that they will prove evil to those that receive them. In case a man should foresee such or such an event in one kind or other that would certainly follow upon any act or gift of his, his foresight would be such literally and properly, *i. e.* he should have knowledge of the event before he had done the action or given the gift, the event whereof he is said to foresee or foreknow. But now God, though he be said to foresee the issue or event of any action or gift of his, yet is not said, properly, or as the word sounds in ordinary acception with men, to foresee it, *i. e.* he doth not first or antecedaneously in respect of time foresee it, or see it before the action be performed by him or the gift given, the event whereof he is said to foresee. For as God himself is not measured by time, so neither are any of his actions; and it is a generally received maxim in theology, admitted by all divines, that God willeth nothing in time, but all things in or from eternity. Now there is the same reason or consideration of his foreknowledge which there is of his will. As he willeth nothing in time, so neither doth he foreknow or foresee anything in time: His foreseeing of things being nothing really but himself, as all his actions are, it must needs be as ancient as himself, and co-eternal with himself. So likewise that act of his whereby he gives or imparts any thing unto men, though the gift itself given by it doth not come to the hands of men or to be received by men until such or such a time, yet this act itself of his was from eternity; and consequently is not capable of being foreseen by God, because it was as ancient as any foresight or foreknowledge in God, yea, as God himself. And for the sad event or consequent of this action or gift of his unto men, though he may, in a sense formerly declared, Chap. 2. p. 51,55, be said to foresee it because it happeneth in time, yet inasmuch as that act passed from him from eternity, and so was from eternity irreversible, by which the gift or gifts sorting to so sad an event in the

receiver, were conferred upon him in time, there is no reason nor colour of reason why he should be thought to give such gifts, being in themselves good and worthy his infinite goodness, out of any whit the less love, grace, or mercy towards him who receiveth them, because he foresaw, after his manner of foreseeing, that they would be abused by him to his harm ; especially considering that it was not in his power, I mean in the power of God, to have done more towards the preventing of such an abuse of them by such a man than he did. It cannot be thought but that God did foresee that the Jews of old would mock his messengers and despise his words, and misuse his prophets until his wrath arose against them, and till there was no remedy; yet the vouchsafement of these means of grace and of repentance, the sending of his messengers, words, and prophets unto them, is expressly attributed unto his compassion, (*i. e.* his love of pity or benevolence of affection) towards them. “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, *because he had compassion on his people*, and on his dwelling place,” 2 Chron. 36:15, 16. In like manner our Saviour certainly foresaw that Jerusalem afterwards would not understand or accept of the things of her peace, the means of her safety and preservation; yet he ascribes the vouchsafement of them unto her unto a genuine tenderness of love and care in him towards her and her children. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not,” Matt, 23:37.

But is it not, it is like you will demand, in the power of God absolutely to prevent the abuse of those good gifts of his we speak of by the receivers, and consequently to do more towards the preventing of this abuse than he doth?

I answer, no; both reason and religion, which yet is nothing but reason in her exaltation, teach us to judge and say that it is not in the power of God to prevent the abuse of those good gifts of his we speak of in the receivers otherwise than now he doth prevent it, viz. by affording sufficient means unto them for the prevention of it; this, I say, neither was nor is, according to the sound principles both of reason and religion, any whit more in the power of God to do than it is in his power to lie, deceive, oppress, or do any other thing most unworthy of him. For he that

is omnipotent must needs be omniprudent also ; and he that is omniprudent cannot do any thing in the least degree repugnant to the most rigid and strict principles of the most perfect wisdom and prudence that is. We see it amongst men, that the wiser any man is in reality and truth, the less power he hath to do any thing contrary to the laws and dictates of true wisdom; and the weaker and more defective any man is in this wisdom, the more liberty and power he hath to do foolishly or uncomelily. What was it that made Joseph unable to commit that great wickedness whereunto he was solicited by his mistress ? “How *can* I do this great wickedness saith he, Gen. 39:9; meaning, that he *could* not do it: whereas, doubtless, there were men enough in the world that both could and would have done such a thing as that, though he *could* not. So what was it that made Paul unable to do any thing against the truth, and able only to act for the truth? “For we,” saith he, “ can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,” 2 Cor. 13:8: whereas there were, and are at this day, thousands in the world able, *i. e.* at liberty in their wills and consciences, to act ten times more against the truth than for the truth. The true reason why neither of these men had any power, were not able to do those unworthy things which a thousand other men had power enough to do, was, because they had so much true wisdom in them above other men, which would not suffer them to do such unseemly and unworthy things. And generally we find it, that the more knowingly and prudently conscientious men and women are, the more they are bound up in themselves, and have so much the less liberty or power to do things that are uncomely than other men. So, then, God, being infinitely more wise, and that with the truest and best wisdom that can be imagined, than the wisest of men, must needs in a way of reason be conceived to be more bound up in himself, to have less liberty or power to do any thing contrary to any rule, dictate, or principle of the most exquisite wisdom that is, than any creature whatsoever, whether men or angels. The apostle, as is well known, breaks forth in a holy kind of astonishment upon his contemplation of the wisdom and knowledge of God: “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments;” meaning, that for matter of wisdom and knowledge by which they are ordered, managed, and administered, they are unsearchable, *viz.* to the bottom, or in respect of all the strains or variety of wisdom that are in them; “and his ways,” in respect of the

numberless ingredients of wisdom which he puts into them, “past finding out,” Rom. 11:33. So, then, it being contrary to the law and rules of true wisdom, or of that infinite wisdom which rules in God, for him to act his creatures, at least ordinarily, in opposition to those natural and essential properties and principles which himself hath planted in them, it may easily be conceived how and in what respect he hath no power, *i. e.* no liberty in himself, to prevent the ruin of his creature, man, further or otherwise than by such an interposure of himself or of his grace in order hereunto which will, in respect of any forcibleness or efficacy in working, well consist with the natural and essential freedom and liberty of his will; in respect whereof the utmost line or extent of the liberty or power of God is to proceed no further with men, nor with any man, at any time, in the vouchsafement of grace or means of grace, in order to the preventing of their ruin and destruction, than to leave them a power at least, or possibility, of rejecting the grace offered unto them, and so to ruin and destroy themselves. Nor, doubtless, did God ever go further or rise higher than this, no, not in the most signal or miraculous conversions which either we read of in the Scriptures, or otherwise have heard of, according to truth. I suppose there is not a greater or more notable instance in this kind than that of the conversion of Paul, which, we know, was effected in a very extraordinary way, and with as high a hand of means as ever was lifted up by God for the conversion of a man, viz. by a vision of the Lord Christ himself from heaven, in splendour and great glory, speaking with an audible voice unto him; although I know not whether it be necessary to suppose that the work of Paul’s conversion was perfected, I mean, specifically perfected (for gradually, I presume it was not) by this vision only, or until Ananias, to whom the vision directed him, had made known unto him those things concerning the gospel which he did. But, whether his conversion was specifically perfected by the vision without Ananias’s ministry or no, doubtless there was a liberty or possibility left in Paul himself, to the very last moment or minute of time before his conversion was actually wrought, to have not only resisted, but even frustrated all the means that were used for the effecting of it; frustrated, I mean, not simply or universally, as if Christ should have been disappointed and lost all he had done in order to his conversion, in case he had not been converted, but frustrated in respect of that particular end, his conversion. For God hath always more ends than one, though but one primary and antecedent,

in vouchsafing means of grace and salvation unto men: and whether he obtains the one or the other, it is of much alike concernment unto him, according to that of the apostle: "For we, apostles, or ministers of the gospel, "are unto God," in our ministry, "a sweet," or the sweet, "savour of Christ," i. e. we render Christ, or the mystery of Christ, by a diligent and faithful spreading abroad the knowledge of them in the world, as full of satisfaction and contentment unto God as they are capable of being improved unto, "in them that are saved, and in those that perish;" meaning, that the destruction of those who perish through a rejection of his rich grace in Christ offered to them, is matter of good satisfaction unto him, even as the salvation of those is who accept of this grace from him. So that, let men who have Christ and the means of salvation offered unto them take either the right hand or the left, God will be no loser by them: his counsels and ends, of one kind or other, will be advanced howsoever. How that most serious and solemn profession and oath of God, that he delighteth not "in the death of the wicked," or "of him that dieth," Ezek. 18:32, and 33:11, is of good consistence with the apostles' being the "sweet savour of Christ unto him in them that perish," as also with that profession which himself maketh by Solomon unto wicked men, "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh, and "your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, &c., Prov. 1:26, 27, we shall, I conceive, have opportunity to unfold in the latter part of our present discourse. But this by the way in this place.

Yet give me leave to add one thing further here of necessary consideration for the full clearing of the business in hand. Though it will be consistent with the wisdom of God and the principles thereof to rise sometimes and in some cases in the vouchsafement of the means of grace and of salvation unto men, to the highest pin or degree, in point of efficacy and power, which the native and essential freedom and liberty of the will will bear, yet it is not consistent with, this wisdom of his to do it often, much less ordinarily, or of course. The wisdom of a man leads and teacheth him sometimes upon occasion, and in order to some more than ordinary design, to vary from his customary and constant course of acting, yea, though this customary and constant course of his he simply the best and most agreeable to the rules of wisdom, for him ordinarily to follow. Upon this account the wise man informeth us, that "There is a time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to build up, and a time to pull down

..... a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together,” Eccles. 3:2, &c. with several other instances of like import. When he saith, there is a time to do this and a time to do that which is contrary unto it, his meaning clearly is, that it is prudential and agreeable to rules of wisdom, for a man, according to time, place, and other circumstances, to vary the manner and kind of his ordinary actions, yea, to act at one time with a kind of contrariety to himself at another. In like manner, it is perfectly consistent with the infinite wisdom of God, upon some special occasion, and in order to some gracious design, to open the hand of his bounty in the vouchsafement of means of salvation unto men, much wider than will stand with the same wisdom to do ordinarily, or at another time. And as it may be truly said of a truly wise man, that he cannot cast away stones, when the time is for him to gather stones together; and so, on the contrary, that he cannot gather stones together, when the time and season is to cast them away; such a man cannot mis-time his actions, because his wisdom, which frames and fashions both the consents and dissents of his will, cannot frame or raise a consent of will in him to do any thing contrary to itself, or to its own nature and principles, *i. e.* to do any thing uncomelily or imprudently : so may it truly be said of God in the matter of granting means of faith and of salvation unto men, that he cannot, in the ordinary and standing course of his providence or dispensation of such means, rise so high, give means of that transcendent nature, efficacy, and power, which he can and doth give now and then, in some special cases, and in order to some great and special end. As, for example, God was able, no principle of his wisdom opposing, to vouchsafe unto Paul that extraordinary means of believing, or for his conversion, which we spake of, a glorious vision from heaven. But it doth not follow from hence, that therefore he is able (we still speak of his moral ability, or of the ability of his will) to afford the like vision, or any other means like unto that for efficacy and converting power, ordinarily or unto all other men. When he demands thus concerning his ancient church and people of the Jews, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, hat I have not done in it ?” Isa. 5:4; he had not done any such thing in it, or for it, as he did afterwards for Paul: nor had he multiplied those miracles and great works of wonder, some particulars whereof he did work for them and amongst them, to such a number, or with such frequency, as by his power, simply considered, and without

relation unto his wisdom, he was able to have done : and yet he might truly say and profess unto them, as his demand mentioned imports, that he could do no more for them, (to make them fruitful, to bring them to repentance, and so to make them a prosperous and happy people) than he had done: *i. e.* he had done the uttermost which his wisdom, in such a case as theirs was, permitted him to do. So, when he vouchsafeth a greater sufficiency of means to one city than he doth to another, as he did to Capernaum above Tyre and Sidon, to one nation than to another, to one age or generation of men than to another; the reason of this difference is to be resolved into the same infinite uniform, though “manifold wisdom of God,” as the apostle calleth it, or, which is the same, into “the counsel of his will,” Eph. 1:11; not simply into his will, but into the counsel of his will, (*i. e.* that infinite wisdom or prudence, by which his will is as it were steered and directed in all the motions and actings thereof) according unto which counsel he is said to “work all things,” Eph. 1:11. And it may be as truly and as properly said of him, when he vouchsafeth the least and lowest sufficiency of means unto some men, as when he affordeth the greatest and richest of all unto others, that he did or doth what he could, or what he is able to do, as well for the one as for the other. And in such cases of difference as these, that admiration of the apostle, lately mentioned, is most seasonable and proper: “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Rom. 11:33. By his judgments, in this place, we are not, I conceive, to understand only his penal inflictions upon men in one kind or other, but his dispensatory administrations, as he is the judge and great ruler of the world, indefinitely considered, as well such as are munificent as those which are penal: and so the word “ways,” in the latter part of the verse, added, it is like, for explication, indifferently implies as well the one as the other. But how, or in what respect are his judgments, or ways of administration in the world, said to be unsearchable, or past finding out? The former part of the verse clearly informeth us of this; as *viz.* that they are unsearchable in respect of that abundance of wisdom and knowledge, by which, and according unto which, they are first ordered and contrived, and then executed by him. First, they are unsearchable (*viz.* unto men, yea, and to angels too) in respect of that most absolute and perfect knowledge which God hath of every particular circumstance, from the



least to the greatest, of all the actions and ways of all the men in the world; and so of all cities and of all nations, in all succeeding generations, from the morning of the world until the present hour thereof: upon which actions, with all and every their respective circumstances, compared and laid together by God, as by reason of his perfect knowledge of them they readily may be, he builds and forms, by means of his wisdom, of which presently, that entire series, or tenor of his administrations, as well munificent as penal, which from day to day and from age to age take place in the world amongst the sons and daughters of men. Now, because neither men nor angels are capable of knowing or considering all that infinite and endless multitude and variety of actions, with all their circumstances respectively, which are done in the world, upon which, and according to the exigency of which, (not any one of them, from the greatest to the least, omitted or left out,) the providential administrations of God in the world, as well of justice as of mercy and goodness, are founded and framed, hence it is that the apostle concludes, in a posture of admiration, that the judgments of God are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out, in respect of the depths of the riches of that knowledge, which he maketh use of in forming them; meaning, that no creature who knoweth not as much as God himself knoweth, concerning the grounds and reasons why he ordereth the affairs of the world, of persons, of cities, of countries, of ages, as he doth, and not otherwise, can possibly understand or comprehend the absolute exactness and accurateness of them; however he may apprehend somewhat, yea, much of them, I mean chiefly concerning the equity and righteousness of them.

Again, 2. These “judgments” and “ways” of God are “unsearchable and past finding out,” in respect of the “depths of the riches of that wisdom” which is in God, according unto which also they are all calculated and formed by him. For look as in a judge, who is to administer justice, and to give sentence in the causes of men that are brought before him, there ought to be these two things, 1. A perfect knowledge of the respective cases wherein he is to give sentence, in all circumstances relating to them, before he doth give sentence; 2. A principle of wisdom, to weigh and ponder aright every of these cases in all their circumstances respectively, that so he may be enabled to form such a sentence, wherein every circumstance, great and small, relating to every case, may have its due consideration and weight; so there are, and of necessity must be, in God,

to make him an absolute Judge, as he is, of all the world, 1. Such a perfect knowledge, as we speak of, of all cases that are before him in all the world, with all and every particular circumstance relating to every of them. 2. An absoluteness and perfection of wisdom also, 1, to interpret every particular circumstance relating to every particular action and case in the world, according to true principles of justice and equity, so as to be able to say how much better, or how much worse, such or such an action is, by reason of such or such a circumstance, one or more; 2, to raise or frame such a sentence, and to administer and execute it accordingly, which shall be made up, as it were, of the equitable results of all and every of those circumstances, which are to be taken into consideration in every award. Now the wisdom which God maketh use of in both these ways, in and about the government of the world, hath so many unfathomable “depths” in it, is so “rich” above measure, so unconceivable, incomprehensible, in the discerning abilities and estimative worth of it, that those judiciary acts and ways which proceed from it, and are moulded and formed by the spirit and strength of it, are greater than all created understanding, above all comprehension, either by men or angels.

By the light of what hath been now argued, it fully appeareth, 1. That all such men who “turn the grace of God,” in those worthy means of salvation which he vouchsafeth unto them, “into wantonness,” and are not in conclusion saved by them, but perish so much the more grievously, are, notwithstanding, as much obliged in point of thankfulness unto him for them as they could have been in case they should be saved by them. 2. That the vouchsafement and bestowing of such means upon them by God, notwithstanding the certainty of his foreknowledge, as foreknowledge is attributable unto him, that they will not prove saving unto them in the end, are yet arguments and pledges of as much grace, love, and mercy unto them, as they would or could be in case he had as certainly foreknown that they would be of a saving consequence unto them. 3. That God, his infinite wisdom considered, and the obligations thereof upon him, goeth as far, doth as much, to render the means of grace exhibited unto those who perish effectual to their salvation as is possible for him to do. 4, and lastly, That that foreknowledge which is in God of the future abuse and miscarrying of the means of salvation, in those to whom they are exhibited or vouchsafed by him, doth not precede that act of his by

which they are exhibited unto them, this being eternal, or from eternity, as well as that.

## CHAPTER 17.

**Declaring, in what sense the former passages of Scripture asserting the universality of redemption by Christ, are, as to this point, to be understood ; and, consequently, in what sense the said doctrine of universal redemption is maintained in the present discourse.**

ALTHOUGH an intelligent and observant reader may, from several passages occasionally inserted here and there in the precedure of this discourse, clearly enough perceive and understand in what sense, and with what explications and provisos, the said doctrine of universal redemption by Christ is asserted and maintained herein, and consequently in what sense the author understandeth all those texts of Scripture which hold forth the said doctrine unto the world, many of which have been formerly produced upon the account; yet, that the reader may readily, without either burdening his memory, or spending time in turning over leaves, know where to find his mind and sense concerning both fully explained, I judged it not amiss to devote one entire chapter unto his service herein.

Therefore,

1. To express our meaning in the said doctrine negatively, or rather our non-meaning, when, with the Scriptures, we affirm and teach that “Christ died for all men,” (*i. e.* for the redemption and salvation of “all men,” without exception of any; for we do not find in Scripture that he died for any for whose salvation he died not,) we do not mean or suppose either, 1, that he died sufficiently only for all men, (*i. e.* only that there was price or merit enough in his death for the redemption of “all men;”) or, 2, that God, or himself, did every ways, or in every respect, as, viz. both antecedently and consequently intend the redemption of salvation of “all men,” in or by his death. Nor, 3, do we mean or suppose, in the said doctrine, that Christ died so, or upon such terms, for all men, that all men shall in time, or at last, be actually redeemed, (from sin and misery,) or eternally saved, by his death. Nor, 4, do we suppose that God, or Christ as God, intends the salvation of all men, or of any man or men, by Christ’s death, with intentions formally or properly so called, or such as are found in men. Nor, 5, do we mean or suppose, in the doctrine avouched, that

Christ, by his death, purchased or procured the infusion or gift either of faith or repentance for all men, or, indeed, for any man, or numbers of men, personally considered. Nor, 6, and lastly, for our negative, that by his said, death he purchased or procured pardon or forgiveness of sins for all men, or for any man, or number of men simply considered, or as such and such men by name. But,

1. For our sense and meaning, in the affirmative, we hold and mean, in the doctrine specified, that there was a reality of intention on God's part, (in such a sense as reality of intention is appropriable unto him, which sense we opened at large formerly, and shall briefly again declare in this chapter,) that as there was a valuable consideration, or worth of merit, in the death of Christ, fully competent and sufficient for the ransom or redemption of all men, so it should be equally, and upon the same terms, erogable, or applicable unto all men, in order to their redemption, without any difference, or special contraction or limitation of it unto some more than others.

2. We hold and mean in and about the premises that God did only antecedently intend the actual redemption and salvation of all men in and by the death of Christ; but consequently the redemption and salvation only of some, viz., those who shall believe. What it is to will or intend a thing antecedently, and what consequently, hath been shown formerly, Chap. 6. p. 169, and shall, God willing, be somewhat further opened in this chapter.

3. When we teach that Christ died for all men, we intend and mean that there is a possibility, yea, a fair and gracious possibility, for all men without exception, considered as men, without and before their voluntary obduration by actual sinning, to obtain actual salvation by his death : so that in case any man perisheth, his destruction is altogether from himself, there being as much, and as much intended, in the death of Christ, for and towards the procuring of his salvation, as there is for procuring the salvation of any of those who come to be actually saved.

4. When, with the Scriptures, we deliver this, for a doctrine of truth, that Christ died for all men, we suppose and mean that God intends the salvation of all men by this death, only so, after such a manner, or with such a kind of intention which is compatible to and consistent with his infinite simplicity and perfection of being. Of this kind of intention we argued in our third chapter, where we gave a particular and clear account

of it; and shall take it the second time into some brief consideration in this chapter. This particular is of affinity with the first, but is not altogether the same.

5. When we teach that Christ died for all men, we mean not only that he put all men without exception into a capability of being saved, as, viz., by believing, but also that he wholly dissolved and took off from all men the guilt and condemnation which was brought upon all men by Adam's transgression. So that now no man shall perish or be condemned but upon his own personal account, and for such sins only which shall be actually and voluntarily committed by him, or for such omissions which it was in his power to have prevented.

6. When, with the Scriptures, we affirm that Christ died for all men, our sense and meaning is, that by his death he procured this grace and favour with God for all men without exception, viz., that they should receive from him sufficient strength and means, or be enabled by him, to repent and to believe, yea, and to persevere in both unto the end; and that in this sense, and none other, he is, or may be said to have by his death purchased the grace of faith and repentance for men; and this upon equal terms in an antecedent consideration for all men.

7. and lastly, Our sense and meaning in the said doctrine further is, that Christ by his death purchased this transcendant grace also and favour in the sight of God for all men without exception, that upon their repentance and believing in him they should be justified and receive forgiveness of all their sins; and that upon their perseverance in both unto the end, they should be actually and eternally saved; and that in this sense and in this only, he is and may be said to have purchased justification or remission of sins, redemption, salvation, &c. for men, for any man, or any number of men: yea, and in this sense, for all men.

The imputation, from the guilt whereof we desire in special manner to wash our hands in innocency by this explication is, that as we hold universal redemption so we hold likewise universal salvation, or that all men shall be saved by Christ. That such an opinion as this is no consequent of the doctrine maintained in this discourse concerning the death of Christ, for all men, sufficiently appeareth from that ground which we have laid and built upon, once and again, in the former part of this discourse, viz.: That such intentions and desires in God and in Christ which are real and cordial may yet very possibly never take place or he

fulfilled. See what hath been proposed and debated upon this account, Chap. 2. p. 60, and again Chap. 3. p. 80, 83, and yet again Chap. 10. p. 298. This supposed, it may very easily be conceived that God may intend the salvation of all men by the death of Christ, and yet all men not be saved. Which opinion, I mean that all men shall be saved, as it hath no communion at all with the doctrine avouched in this discourse, so hath it every whit as little with the author's sense or judgment otherwise; who approveth the sentence of the Constantinopolitan Synod assembled under the Emperor Justinian, wherein this opinion, held, as it seems, by Origen with a surplusage of error joined with it, was condemned. Yea, to me it seemeth not a little strange how any man professing subjection of judgment unto the Scriptures should ever come to a confederacy with such an opinion. For with what frequency and evidence of expression do these rise up against it, ever and anon intimating and asserting on the one hand the paucity of those that will or shall be saved, in comparison of those that will perish, and on the other hand the perpetuity or everlastingness of the perdition and misery of those who do perish? Nor do they give the least intimation or hope of release from misery unto those who die in their sins and perish in their unbelief. "Enter in at the strait gate," saith Christ unto the children of men in his doctrine upon the mount, "for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be that go in thereat," but we read of none that return or come out thereat: "because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matt. 7:13, 14; *i. e.* that find it either first or last, or ever. For that this is his meaning appears from these and such like sayings: "Wherefore, if thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched," he doth not say into the fire that is hard to be quenched, or which will be long in quenching, but *ἡς το πνρ ῥβ ἀσβετον*, *i. e.* into that fire which differs from all other kinds of fire in this, that whereas they are quenchable, no decree of God interposing to the contrary, this by the unchangeable law of Heaven is made unquenchable; for the redoubling of the article GREEK, hath this import, which is likewise further confirmed by that which followeth, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:43, 44. These expressions, "dieth not, is not quenched," though according to their

precise grammatical import, they only deny the act, the one of dying, the other of quenching; yet according to Scripture dialect, they deny also the very power or possibility of these acts. For there is nothing more frequent here than by the denial of the act to deny the power or possibility of a thing. Thus, Gen. 13:6, where our translation readeth “and the land was not *able* to bear them,” the original only saith, “and the land *did* not bear them,” as Mr. Ainsworth also translateth the place. So Prov. 24:7, where our last translation, respecting the original, hath it, “he *openeth not* his mouth in the gate,” our former translators rather minding the sense and import of the place, read it thus, “he *cannot open* his mouth in the gate;” to omit many the like. So that when our Saviour saith concerning the estate of those that go or are cast into hell, that their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched,” his meaning is, that their worm cannot die, nor their fire be quenched; *i. e.* their punishment or torment can never have an end or interruption, viz. because the counsel of the will of the Almighty hath resolved against both, and judged it meet to make them easeless and endless. Upon this account also John the Baptist saith concerning Christ, that “he hath his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but will burn up the chaff with *unquenchable fire*” Matt. 3:12. So likewise the apostle Paul clearly teacheth, that “the Lord Jesus shall show himself from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who,” saith he, “shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord,” &c., 2 Thess. 1:7—9. To this purpose the evangelist John reports it for the saying of an angel unto him in his vision, that “if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out *without mixture* into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of his holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for *ever and ever*,” &c. Rev. 14:9—11. These last words are again used in the description of the vengeance that shall be executed upon the “whore:” “And again they,” the people that were in heaven, “said, Alleluia; and her smoke rose up *for ever and ever*,” Rev. 19:3. Afterwards, in the same book, we read, that “the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false



prophet are, and shall be *tormented day and night for ever and ever*," Rev. 20:10. This expression, "for ever and ever," so signally expressed in all the three testimonies last recited, plainly imports that the duration or continuance of the punishment and torment of those who perish in their sins, and are cast into hell, is not commensurable with the continuance of the Mosaical law, long since expired, which in the Old Testament is frequently signified by a word signifying, or at least commonly rendered "for ever," Exod. 28:43; 29:28 ; Lev. 16:29, &c., but usually interpreted "for a long time," or for the time of a man's life, &c., but commensurable with the duration of the kingdom of God, of the life of God and of Jesus Christ; for these, in respect of their continuance, are almost constantly said to be "for ever and ever," Psal. 10:16; 21:4; Rev. 4:9; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7, &c.; *i. e.* for eternity, or without end. The notion and term of the "bottomless pit," frequently used in the book of Revelation to signify the state or condition of the damned, plainly enough imports the endlessness or everlastingness of their misery. If we could suppose a ditch or pit without bottom, in the midst of which a man should be thrown, we could not with congruity of notion but suppose also that this person would be always falling, and that his motion or fall would never be at an end. The like apprehension, doubtless, concerning the case and state of those who die in their sins, in respect of their torment and misery, the Holy Ghost seeks to form and plant in in our souls and consciences by the metaphor or borrowed resemblance of a "bottomless pit." It were easy to multiply texts of Scripture to make that voice, which hath now spoken unto us in those last cited, far greater and louder; but those which we have heard speak already in the point have spoken so plainly, that the rest may keep silence at the present without loss or disadvantage to the truth.

Neither do the Scriptures so much as whisper any thing of semblance or comport with the opinion now rejected. As for that of the apostle, Eph. 1:10, which some well-willers to the said opinion look upon as sympathising with them in their judgments that way, it will, upon a, due inquiry, be found of another spirit. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times," saith. this place, "he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in. him," &c.: whereunto, for affinity's sake, we may join that from the same pen: "For it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell: and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to

reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven,' Col. 1:19, 20. From these passages laid together some judge it to be a very legitimate inference that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," *i. e.* as they understand, in due time, though it be very long before, "all things," *i. e.* all persons of men or mankind, "whether in heaven or in earth," *i. e.* as well those who at present are at the greatest distance from the love and favour of God, whether alive or dead, (the earth containing both,) as those that are already in his favour, and therefore in blessedness and glory, shall be "gathered into one by Christ;" *i. e.* shall be "reconciled unto him," and so be invested together in "one" and the same condition of happiness and glory, by virtue of the death of Christ, who died for them all, and that to procure their actual reconcilment unto God, sooner or later, however wickedly and unbelievingly they should either live or die. But that such a gloss as this is quite besides the text and the true import of it, is not hard to demonstrate. For,

1. Neither of the said passages speak of the event, issue, or success of that glorious design of God by Jesus Christ specified in them, but of the design itself, or what was projected or intended by him. Now, the design or projection of God by Jesus Christ here reported was, as the apostle expresseth it in the former place, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα Χριστῷ, *i. e.* to re-collect, reduce, or gather all things into one head by Christ, or in Christ, "both things in heaven and tilings on earth." In the latter place, this design is said to be the. "reconciling of all things to himself by Christ, whether things on earth or things in heaven." By "all things, whether in heaven or on earth," by the joint consent of all interpreters, he means angels (holy angels) and men. The neuter gender for the masculine is a frequent construction in the Scriptures, and emphatical. τὸν δὲ ὅλον κόσμον ἡμεῖς ἀποκαταστήσαμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, *i. e.* "every thing," meaning, every person of mankind, "which my Father giveth unto me," &c. John 6:37. So presently after, τὰ πάντα ἡμεῖς ἀποκαταστήσαμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, *i. e.* that "every thing which he hath given me," &c., verse 39. So, τὰ μωρὰ, καὶ τὰ ἄσθενή του κόσμου, *i. e.* the "foolish things and the weak things of the world," 1 Cor. 1:27; for foolish men, and weak men, so esteemed. See also 1 John 5: 4; Rev. 21:27, &c. The note of universality, πάντα, is better limited to that kind of subject which is properly capable of being headed by Christ, viz. as men and angels; than extended to all things simply and whatsoever; though such a sense as this be passable

enough, and is embraced by some. When the apostle saith, that God's project or design was to recapitulate, or re-collect, or gather all things into or unto a head by Christ, both angels and men, he supposeth, 1. That both stood in need of a head, i. e. of one set in place of power and authority over them, who should be both able and willing to govern, order, protect, and direct them so, or upon such terms, that they might not, with any tolerable care over themselves, miscarry in point of greatest happiness, as the one of them, men, had generally done already, and the other, angels, were liable to do, as many of their kind, and of the same creation and nature with them, had done, as Calvin well observes upon the place, affirming, that "as men were lost, so were the angels not out of danger" (of losing.) & He supposeth further, that God did not intend the effecting of this his design by mere power or prerogative-wise; I mean so as to thrust or force Christ for a head either upon men or angels, nor yet to propound or offer him unto either for a head, in his mere naturals, if I may so speak, unwrought or uncontrived, but as a person orderly and duly fitted and prepared for such a relation, partly by assuming the human nature, or a body of flesh, partly by suffering death, the death of the cross, in this body, and by his rising again from the dead. For by suffering death, especially the death of the cross, in the human nature, 1. He "made peace," as the apostle expresseth it in the latter of the passages, i. e. he did that which was proper and effectual to "reconcile" men unto himself, and consequently unto angels also, who were at enmity with them, because of their enmity against God, yea, and unto and amongst themselves also. The death of Christ in the human nature was upon this account a proper means to "reconcile" men unto God, (i. e. to cause men to think holily and reverently of him, to love him, delight in him, &c., who by reason of the guilt of sin cleaving to them were apt before to hate him, as malefactors do their judge,) viz. because God, the sins of men being perfectly expiated and atoned thereby, freely offereth them, and upon their repentance assureth them, the pardon and forgiveness of their sins. See to this purpose, 2 Cor. 5:19, largely opened by us formerly. So then, the death of Christ being a proper means, as hath been shown, for the "reconciling" of men unto God, it must needs be a means semblably, and by way of consequence, of reconciling them unto angels also, who had no other quarrel against them but only for their hatred and enmity against God. Now this reconciliation between men and angels, when actually

effected, putteth them into a capacity of being fellow-members in one and the same body, and so of uniting mutually under one and the same head. For as “two cannot walk together except they be agreed,” so neither can a plurality of persons kindly, and to the contentment either of themselves mutually, or of their head, incorporate into one and the same community, or walk in subjection under the same head. In which respect the reconcilment of men also to and amongst themselves, as, viz. of Jews unto Gentiles, and Gentiles unto Jews, who through diversity of religious opinions, and outward forms of worshipping God, were at enmity the one against the other, (and there is the same reason of other men distanced in affection whether upon the like occasions or otherwise,) was as necessary as that of men unto angels, in order to the accomplishment of the said great design of God. Now Christ by his death, and by the general promulgation of the gospel throughout the world, which dependeth thereon, and was a fruit thereof, both took away the ceremonial observations of the Jews, with their notions and opinions hanging thereon, as also the idolatrous and superstitious rites and observations of the Gentiles, with, such conceits as they built hereon, which together made, as it were, a double “partition wall” between them; thus endeavouring, with a high hand of grace, to reduce both the one and the other of them into one and the same way of worshipping God, viz. that prescribed in the gospel, as also both to think and speak the same things concerning God, and so to cause the enmity and alienation of mind between them to cease, that by this means they might be prepared and fit to make as fellow-members one body. See the apostle’s discourse to this point, Eph. 2:11–16. The same, or the like course, he hath taken also by his death, and the publication of his gospel thereupon, to reconcile all other persons of mankind among themselves, viz. by calling them into communion in one Spirit, in one faith, in one hope, in one baptism, in one God, in one Saviour, &c., that so there might be no occasion of any such differences or distastes between them, but that they might be every ways meet to associate in one and the same spiritual body, and live sweetly together under one and the same Head, Jesus Christ. This then is one consideration wherein the death of Christ was necessary for the bringing about the glorious projection of God, I mean the “gathering of all things, whether in heaven or on earth,” under, or “into a head,” the same head, Christ.

Secondly, This death of Christ did accommodate the same design of God in another respect also, viz. as his voluntary subjection hereunto was an equitable foundation or consideration whereon God might, as he did, exalt him to the transcendent honour of that glorious headship and principality. “Wherefore,” saith the apostle, meaning because, “being in the form of God,” an estate wherein “he counted it no robbery,” as he had no reason to do, “to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation ; but humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross in consideration of this wonderful humiliation and condescension, saith he, “God hath even highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,” &c., Phil. 2:6—9, &c. Hence it is that the Scriptures still mention that glorious investiture of his which we speak of, headship over men and angels, as conferred upon him, not till after his rising again from the dead, “ according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come; and hath *put all things under his feet*, and *gave* him to be the *head* over all things to the church,” &c. Eph. 1:19—22. From these last words, “and hath put,” &c., it is observable, that though God hath by a strong hand “subjected” all things whatsoever under and unto Christ, yet he hath “*given* him to his church,” and to his church only, consisting of men and angels, Col. 2:10, for a head. From whence it follows, 1. That neither men nor angels are necessitated or compelled by God to accept of Christ for their head, or in the relation of a head, though they be necessitated and compelled, with all other creatures, to subject to his will and pleasure in the exercise of his power. For that which is properly given to a man he is not forced to accept or take, but receives it freely. If men or angels be unwilling, or shall refuse to be or to continue members of his church, as they are at liberty to do, (for their wills in this kind are not compelled or necessitated by God,) they shall discharge themselves, though to their infinite loss and misery, from their relation or subjection unto Christ as their head. 2. That Christ stands in the relation of a head, and so performs the offices of a head only unto such, whether angels or men, who are members of that body which is called his church. So that though the nature and compass of God’s great projection by Christ, and his death, was, as we heard the

apostle expressing it, ἀνακίφαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα, &c., to “head,” or “rehead, all things” whatsoever, viz. that are headable, as we interpreted, “whether in heaven or on earth,” (*i. e.* all men without exception, and all standing angels) yet it doth not follow from hence that all men without exception, ever will or shall be actually headed by Christ, and so be saved by him, because many will not accept of, or submit unto, those terms, upon which only the declared will and purpose of God is to interest his creature actually in so great and blessed a privilege. For though God’s purpose and design was to head all men without exception, with or in Christ, as well as all his good angels, (*i. e.* so to give and contrive his Christ, that all of both sorts of these creatures, without exception, might be put into a capacity and have opportunity of being brought into the relation of members under so glorious a head,) yet it was no part of either, that any one particular, whether of the one kind of creature or of the other, should actually come into this relation otherwise than by a free and voluntary acceptation of Christ for their head. So that as the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel or projection of God (intended by him for good unto them) in baptism against themselves (*i. e.* to their own great damage and loss) in refusing to be baptised by John, Luke 7:30: in like manner the greatest part of men voluntarily reject the great counsel of God for the reducing of them under so infinitely desirable a head, as the Lord Christ is, to their own unconceivable misery, by refusing to subject themselves unto him in the relation of members.

Nor doth it follow from such a rejection of that counsel of God we speak of by men, that therefore this counsel of his, or his intention in it, should be frustrated or made void; because, as hath been said, the tenor, frame, or import of this counsel was, not that all men without exception should absolutely and without condition be actually invested with the benefit or blessing therein intended unto men; but that all such men without exception, and such only, who should believe in Christ, and freely submit unto him as a head, were they all without exception, or were they never so few or never so many, should actually partake of the said benefit. Therefore from neither of the two passages of Scripture cited towards the beginning of this chapter, can any such conclusion be evinced, That all men without exception shall first or last be saved by Christ; because it cannot be evinced from either of them, that all men without exception will believe in him first or last, without which there is no salvation

supposed in either of them. That neither of the places speak of any such reconcilment of all things unto God, which was actually to take place in any person of man, without the intervening of faith; nor yet again that either of them supposeth an absolute necessity, that all men or that any man should believe, so as to be actually and completely reconciled unto God, by means of the projected reconciliation here spoken of, is evident from this applicatory discourse of the apostle, subjoined to the latter of them: “ And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and irreproveable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,” &c. In this clause, “If ye continue in the faith grounded,” &c., he clearly supposeth, 1. That their present reconciliation unto God was obtained by the intervention of their faith; and, 2, That the perfecting and completing of it in glory did depend upon their perseverance in this faith unto the end. Which latter clearly implieth, that notwithstanding that reconciliation which God made of all things to himself by Christ, yet they might very possibly not have been reconciled unto him or saved in the end. We formerly observed from Doctor Prideaux, “ That such conditional sayings, upon which admonitions, promises, or threatenings are built, do at least suppose something in possibility, however by virtue of their tenor and form they suppose nothing in being,” Chap. 12. p. 368. 2. For those words, in the former of the said places, “ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together all,” &c., they no ways import any such time yet to come, wherein all men should be actually gathered together in one, or be saved by Christ; but only that God made choice of the most convenient time, as, viz. when many ages and generations of the world had first passed, to bring his Son Jesus Christ into the world to suffer death, and so to raise him again from the dead, and upon this to anoint him with that precious oil of joy and gladness, by which he was consecrated into the great honour and dignity of that glorious headship we speak of, and whereof he stands possessed at this day; and that for this end, and with this intent on God’s part, that all men without exception that should for the time to come be born, and live in the world, should by believing in him, and submitting to him, have the opportunity to enjoy him in the blessed relation of a glorious head, by whom they

might be preserved and kept in peace and blessedness for ever.

If it be yet demanded, how God, in the latter of the said passages, may be said to reconcile all things (i. e. as well angels as men, as we formerly expounded,) unto himself by Christ, when as between him and his elect angels there was no enmity or distance; I answer,

1. It is not necessary, upon the account of any expression here used by the apostle, to suppose that the angels were in particular reconciled unto God by Christ, but those words, "Whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," maybe taken emphatically, and import only such a sense as this, that as God's project in Christ was for reconciliation, so was it so gloriously vast and comprehensive in this kind, that it compassed and took in not only the inferior world, the earth, and all things therein, but even the superior also, the heavens themselves, and all things herein, viz. as far as they were reconcilable, or stood in need of reconciliation unto him ; so that in case there had been any distance, more or less, between God and his angels, the course which God had taken by his Christ was abundantly sufficient and proper to have healed it. When the same apostle exhorts Timothy in "Preaching the gospel, to be instant in season and out of season," he doth not suppose or imply that there is any time out of season, or unseasonable, for the work; but the expression is emphatical, and imports that he need not be curious or solicitous to distinguish between times and times for the preaching of the gospel, as if there were any danger that he might preach it unseasonably, or at any time or times that were not fitting for such a work: meaning, that all times were seasonable for it. The two expressions, I conceive, do somewhat parallel one the other. Yet, 2. There is a sense, and this not altogether improper, wherein the angels themselves may be looked upon as reconcilable unto God, yea, and as actually reconciled unto him by Christ. For, 1, As Calvin upon the place well observes, "The obedience which the angels perform unto God, is not in every respect so complete or absolute as to satisfy God, without a pacifier coming between." And to this point he citeth that of Eliphaz in Job: "And his angels he charged with folly," Job 4:18. He reads the words, "In his angels he will find iniquity," (agreeable whereunto is that other saying of the same author, "Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight," Job 15:15,) which he is confident cannot he meant of the evil angels or devils. Again, 2, he observeth further, and that with more unquestionableness of truth, that



the angels being creatures are net out of all danger of falling, and so have need of confirmation by the grace of Christ. From whence he concludes that there is not so much righteousness in the angels themselves which sufficeth for their perfect and full conjunction with God, but that they also stand in need of a peace-maker by whose grace they may thoroughly and entirely cleave unto God. When he ascribeth their obnoxiousness to fall unto their being creatures, he plainly supposeth that they have no such confirmation by Christ, but that they are in a possibility, at least, of falling, this notwithstanding, inasmuch as they are creatures still, as well as they were before, or should have been without this confirmation by him, though it is true their condition is eminently bettered by that benefit of confirmation which they have by Christ, being hereby become out of danger, though not out of possibility of falling. But this by the way. Whether the present righteousness or obedience of angels be every ways so absolute as to satisfy God without any further satisfaction from another or no, in case without that confirmation which now they have received by Christ, they had been liable to offend God and make him their enemy, but are by means thereof delivered from this danger, they may properly enough be said to be reconciled unto God by him. For as such a recipe, which is taken to prevent a disease may be as properly called physic as that which is used to recover a man out of sickness, in like manner I see no reason but that that gracious and friendly act by which a breach likely to happen between two is prevented, may be called an act of reconcilment as well as that whereby actual enmity between them is healed. Or,

3, and lastly, The best interpretation of the place may very probably be this, which leaveth no place for the difficulty or demand propounded, viz., to expound these words, *ὅς αὐτόν*, not terminatively, or, to himself, but causally, for himself; which construction the preposition *tie*, with an accusative case, frequently admits, *ε τοῦτο γάρ ἔξεκίνηθα* “for *therefore* came I forth,” Mark 1:38. So again, *ὡς τοῦτο ἰΧϋΧυΟα ἵς τον κόσμον, ἵνα μαρτυρήσω* i.e. *for this cause* came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” Besides many the like. The words *tic αὐτόν*, thus understood, render the sense of the place clearly this: That God by the cross, or death of Christ, reconciled men on earth and angels in heaven (viz. between themselves, angels being enemies unto men because of their sinning against God, which cause of enmity being taken away by the

death of Christ, the angels are become friends to them, as we lately showed) not to himself, but *for himself*, i. e. for the effecting of his own gracious design in advancing Christ to be head unto both, being incorporated and united in the same body, which without the healing of the enmity or disaffection between them, could not have been, as we lately proved. This exposition differs not much from that of Augustin, in Cap. 61. 62. “Enchirid. ad Laurentium.” By what hath been argued upon the two passages, it appears, I presume, sufficiently that there is nothing to be found in either of them from which the salvation of all men can with any colour of reason be concluded.

Much less can any such conclusion be regularly drawn from that of our Saviour, “Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence,” meaning out of the prison of hell, “till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,” Matt. 5:26. For threatening men that they not come out of hell till they have paid, &c., he no ways supposeth that in process of time they will suffer to the uttermost of what they have deserved in punishment by sinning against God, and that then God will deliver them. The emphasis of the expression rather carrieth a sense of a contrary import, viz. that they must never expect to come out from this prison, inasmuch as they will never be able to pay in punishment what they owe to the just severity of God for sinning against him, especially after such a rate as they have done. For they are only obdurate and finally impenitent sinners that are cast into this prison. A promise of receiving any thing being made or implied upon the performance of an impossible condition is equivalent to a threatening that a man shall never receive it. When God expresseth himself thus to Jerusalem, “when thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate,” Ezek. 16:55, he rather threateneth this city with a non-returning to her former estate than promiseth any such thing to her. So in case our Saviour should promise unto those that are cast into the prison of hell for the debt of their sins that when they have paid the full debt they shall be released and come forth, it would rather have the import and force of a threatening that they should never be released, than of a promise of releasement after any time whatsoever. Yea, such promises as these are more emphatically interminative or threatening than plain and threatenings themselves. The reason is,

because a plain and bare threatening only imports the purpose of him that threateneth to bring the evil mentioned in the threatening upon the person threatened; whereas such promises as we speak of, wherein deliverance from evil is promised upon the performance of an impossible condition, the reason or cause why the evil threatened should be executed or inflicted upon the person threatened, commonly is implied. As when our Saviour promiseth, for the words in hand have a kind of promissory import, that they who are cast into hell shall come forth when they have paid the uttermost farthing, (i. e. discharged the full debt) he plainly intimates the reason or cause why they shall never come forth out of this prison to be because they will never make such payment. Now a threatening upon an equitable and just ground for the execution of it is much more piercing and convincing than when it is simply and without any mention or intimation of such a ground, denounced. If it be demanded, but why should not men who are cast into hell for sin be able, in continuance of time, to pay the uttermost farthing, and so be delivered from thence at last ? Or, how can it stand with the justice or equity of God's proceedings against men for sin, to inflict everlasting punishments upon them for sinning only for a short time? I answer,

1. Sin, especially such sin for which men are sent to hell, being an injury or base affront, offered to an infinite majesty and goodness, the demerit of it must needs be great and indeed inconceivable. The reviling of a magistrate or the smiting of a prince in the "face are misdemeanors of a higher nature, and justly more punishable by men than the like injuries done to meaner men. Yea, it is the sense of all men, that the greater the person is in dignity, especially when his worth and merit is every ways answerable, to whom an injury or indignity is offered, the greater proportionably is the offence committed, and obligatory to the greater punishment. When the standers-by said to Paul, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Acts 23:3, they clearly intimated that the sin of reviling a person invested with so great a dignity as the high priesthood was signally demeritorious, and deserving exemplary punishment. Now, then, allowing proportionably for the incomprehensible and endless dignity, sovereignty, majesty of God, all in conjunction with eminency of worth and goodness every ways commensurable to them, the injury which men offer unto him by voluntarily sinning against him and his laws, plainly appears to be of infinite demerit, and so binding over the

sinner to an infinite punishment—infinite, I mean, either intensively, in respect of the nature or quality; or extensively, in respect of the duration of it. Now, the creature not being capable of suffering punishment infinite in the former consideration, the just severity of God imposeth upon him that which is infinite in the latter. To speak or think slightly or lightly of the guilt or demerit of sin, or to look upon the punishment of hell fire as exceeding the proportion thereof, proceedeth either from a profound ignorance of the nature, majesty, infinite goodness and sweetness of God, or else from a profane neglect of an intense and due consideration of them.

2. The infinite purity of the Divine nature, and most perfect hatred of sin ruling and reigning therein, may well be conceived little less than to necessitate him, 1. To the denunciation and threatening of that most severe punishment we speak of, for the restraint and prevention of it; and, 2. consequently, to the execution hereof, when the sinner shall despise his atonement, and neglect to wash himself in that fountain which he hath most graciously opened for sin and uncleanness, (*i. e.* for men to purify and wash themselves in, from the defilement of sin, and whatsoever polluteth,) unto the world. In what degree the nature of a man abhorreth any tiling, and apprehendeth a contrariety in it, either to its being or wellbeing, he riseth proportionably in his care and use of means for the prevention of it. The devil, it seems, had made observation of this principle in men, when he said, “Skin for skin, (or rather, skin after skin,) yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,” Job 2:4. Death being, as Bildad styleth him, “the king of terrors,” Job 18:14; *i. e.* a thing which men generally are more afraid of than any thing, than all things in the world besides, engageth the generality of men proportionably to withstand his approaches, and to do the uttermost they are able to deliver themselves out of his hand. Now, that which death is to men, in point of abhorrency, sin is unto God; and, therefore, it ought not to seem strange unto, or offend any man, that he should make the strongest and sharpest bridle he could for the restraint of it in the world; or, consequently, that he should impose by law a penalty as deep and dreadful as the vengeance of eternal fire itself, upon the perpetrators of it. Any thing beneath this doth not answer the degree, or rather the degreeless infinity, of his hatred and abhorrency of sin.

3. The severity of that punishment of sin, which is now under

consideration, will be found the more equitable and just, if we consider, on the one hand, how graciously and bountifully above measure God dealeth with men, in order to their escape and deliverance from it; and, on the other hand, how wilfully, how desperately, and with what senseless irrationality, men must go to work and act to bring themselves into the suffering of it.

3.1. God hath discovered unto men, as by a vision of the noonday, the great deformity, foulness, filthiness, and most detestable abominableness of sin. The devil was never presented to any man's sight, mind, or imagination, in any such monstrous, uncouth, horrid, affrighting form or shape, as sin is exhibited to the judgments and consciences of men in the Scriptures.

3.2. He hath discovered likewise, upon the same terms, that most viperous, violent, that most pernicious and keen antipathy which sin carrieth in it against the peace, comfort, well-being, and sovereign blessedness of men. Poverty, shame, sickness, pains, tortures, and torments in the flesh, death, the grave, putrefaction, rottenness, &c., are but as the hummings of a gnat or bitings of a flea, of light and inconsiderable enmity to the comfort and happiness of men, in respect of that most enormous, execrable, devouring, and confounding contrariety thereunto, which the word of God informeth the world to be in sin.

3.3. As concerning those accommodations to the nature of man, as in pleasures, profits, or contentments otherwise, by the promise whereof sin is wont to commend herself and her service to the children of men, and to draw them aside into folly, God hath undertaken and engaged himself, partly by promise, partly by oath, to confer the same, either formally or eminently, upon them, in ways of righteousness and of honour, if they will be persuaded to walk in them. 3.4. In case men, either through ignorance, in any degree hard to be overcome and expelled by coming to the knowledge of the truth, or through human frailty or incogitancy, shall be prevented with sin, or entangled in any sinful course, God hath, as it were, at the cost and charge of his Son Jesus Christ, in most bitter sorrows and sufferings, reared up a golden altar, I mean that of repentance, for them to flee unto, and to take hold of; from whence he hath most magnificently promised never to take, or pluck, any man to destroy him, how unrighteous, wicked, or unworthy soever his ways have been.

3.5. That law, by the observation and keeping whereof, men may, and shall, be free from sinning, and so from guilt contracted hereby, is, in all the respective branches and parts of it, “holy, and just, and good holy, *i. e.* honourable to those that keep it; it requires nothing, no act of obedience from men which is any ways ignoble, servile, base, or reflecting disparagement upon them. Just, *i. e.* tempered, framed, and fitted to such principles which God hath planted in the natures of men, so that there is nothing commanded in it which either crosseth or thwarteth any impression, disposition, or inclination, which is natural to them, or which God hath planted in them; or which requireth any other, any further strength, to perform it than what God either had actually conferred upon them, or is ready to confer, upon such an application of themselves unto him for the obtaining hereof, of which they are very capable. Lastly. The said law is, in all parts of it, good also, *i. e.* commodious and beneficial to the observers, according to that of David, “In keeping of them there is great reward,” Psal. 19:11; so that sin, especially such sin or sins which, in the end, bring the vengeance of hell fire upon them, if men be not extremely careless, negligent, and slothful, may very well be prevented.

3.6. God hath plainly forewarned men of that eternal wrath and vengeance which he is determined to bring and execute upon all persons, that shall be found finally impenitent: whereby he hath taken a very gracious and effectual course, not only to bring sin, especially continuance in sin, out of credit and request with the hearts of men, but to make it as the shadow of death unto them, the dread, and first-born of abhorings to their consciences and souls. 3.7. Unto all those, who shall be found obedient unto his laws, refraining ways of sin and of unrighteousness, he hath promised, and that upon such terms that men may very well come to be fully satisfied upon clear and evident grounds, of the reality and truth of these promises, the most magnificent, bountiful, and glorious reward of life and immortality, and all the desirable and great things of the world to come. By this he hath taken a like gracious and effectual course to exalt righteousness and sinlessness of life and conversation, in the hearts and souls and consciences of men.

3.8. To put himself into a capacity of making such promises as these, as also of performing and making them good, unto men, and so generally of treating with them so graciously as now he doth, about the great things of their peace, he hath delivered up unto death, the most bitter and

ignominious death of the cross, his only begotten Son, in whom his soul greatly delighted. Hereby he hath given all possible evidence and assurance unto men, with what eight and ardency of affection and desire he seeketh their salvation and eternal happiness, how transcendently great his love, how tender above measure his compassions are towards them.

3.9. and lastly. Over and besides all these gracious administrations and expressions of himself towards them, he vouchsafeth unto them the monitory, assisting, and strengthening presence of his infinite Spirit with them, and that upon such terms, that if they regard and comport with him in his first and lower motions, they shall have an advance and increase of such his presence, and he stirred up and strengthened mightily to oppose temptations unto sin, to walk in paths of righteousness, and generally to act in due and regular order, as to the escaping of the wrath and vengeance which is to come, so to the obtaining of that life and glory, which God hath promised to those that love him. Now the consideration of these particulars, with some others of like import, that may be added, maketh it fully evident that men have, 1. All the real engagements upon them, and, 2. All the most efficacious means vouchsafed unto them, that they are capable of, to refrain from sin, and to love and practise righteousness : in which regard the most severe punishment that can be inflicted upon them for a wilful obdurateness in ways of sin, is but equitable and just.

4, and lastly. Concerning the pretended disproportion between the practice of sin, as being but for a short time, and the punishment of hell fire, continuing for ever, it hath been sufficiently atoned, and the seeming hardness thereof taken off by the premised considerations. The demerit of a sin, which may be suddenly, and in the twinkling of an eye, committed, may be such, and so enormous, as to deserve punishment of a long continuance. The act of murder is, or may be committed almost in an instant: yet all men judge it but equitable that the murderer should have his life taken from him; which, in truth and strictness of consideration, is a perpetual punishment, being a perpetual deprivation of that, which is, or was most dear to the offender. And generally the law of retaliation, which requireth “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” &c., is, I suppose, judged by all men most reasonable and equal. And yet this law, in the ordinary process and execution of it, inflicteth punishments

very disproportionable, in respect of continuance, to the time wherein or whilst, the transgression was in acting. A man may in an instant of time, well nigh strike out the eye of another, and yet the loss of one of his own eyes, which according to the exigency of the law we speak of, he must suffer for such a misdemeanor, would he a punishment to him whilst he lives. When a labourer receives his hire, or wages, for his day's work, there is no proportion between the time of his labour and the time wherein or whilst he receiveth his wages: the proportion which in this case is, in equity, to be considered, is not between the time or continuance of the one and the other, but between the value or worth of the one and the other. A man may receive in the fortieth part of an hour, the full value of his twelve hours' labour. In like manner, the proportion which reason and equity requireth to be observed between sins and punishments, consisteth not in an equality of time between the committing of the one, and the indicting or suffering of the other, but in an equality between the degrees of demerit in the one, and of suffering in the other. Now it hath been clearly proved, that such an equality as this is to be found between sin, which is practised or committed, but within a short space of time comparatively, and between the punishment of hell fire, though continuing for ever. And let me here add this; that the shortness of the time, wherein men are and know themselves to be, in a capacity or possibility of sinning, knowing withal that their punishment for sinning will be sore and endless, is, in justness of account, rather an aggravation than extenuation of the demerit of their sinning. For of the two, it is much more irrational and unworthy of men, knowingly and voluntarily to bring an eternity of most grievous punishment upon their own heads, by sinning for a short space only, than it would be to incur the same misery, upon the account of a larger time of sinning; as it is a point of greater folly and indiscretion, for a man to waste a fair estate, and to bring poverty or beggary like an armed man upon him, by the vain luxury, and excess of one day, or one hour only, than it would be to continue in a spending posture for ten or twenty years together, and to come to beggary at the last. The Holy Ghost in Scripture, frequently insinuates the irrationality of sinning, by the consideration of the short and inconsiderable continuance of the accommodations accruing unto men thereby. "Wilt thou," saith Solomon, "set thine eyes upon that which is not?" *i. e.* the being whereof is inconsiderable, and next to that



which is not, or which hath no being at all for the short continuance of it, “for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven,” Prov. 23:5. Now every whit as certain it is, that the fruits or contentments which accrue unto men by other ways and means of sinning, are every whit as perishable, of as short and uncertain a continuance, as riches, which are the birth that covetousness travelleth with, and is pained to bring forth. So that all particulars relating to the business in hand, being put to account, and truly summed up together, amount to this, that there is no unrighteousness, or hardness in it at all, that God for the sins which men impenitently and with wilful obdurateness of heart, commit within the short compass or space of mortality, should inflict a punishment of an everlasting continuance. Nor is this his severity against sin any whit the more obnoxious or disparageable, because he himself suffers no inconvenience thereby in the least, his estate in blessedness and glory being liable to no breach, or disaccommodation. This rather commends the equity of such his proceedings against sin and sinners, and clearly evinceth that what he doth in punishing the one and the other with that severity of punishment, which hath been oft mentioned, he doth not out of any spirit of revenge, properly so called, or as it is frequently found in men, nor out of any desire of self-reparations, but out of the most absolute and perfect righteousness, holiness, and purity of his nature, in conjunction with that most exquisite, sedate, and dispassionate knowledge which he hath of the just demerit of sin.

Whereas, in the explication of our doctrine, concerning Christ’s dying for all men (p. 561 of this chapter) we signified that intentions and so reality of intention, are not competible unto God, in all and every respect, wherein they are ascribed unto men: though we have sufficiently accounted for our sense and meaning herein formerly, yet we shall here, for the reader’s satisfaction, briefly review that account, that so it may clearly appear, how and in what sense we affirm and hold, that God intended or intendeth the salvation of all men, in or by the death of Christ. The actions of men, and so of angels, and of any creature whatsoever, as well immanent as transient, inward as outward, not being really the same things with their respective natures, essences, or beings, have their peculiar and appropriate forms really distinct from their said natures and beings, so that they may be actually separated from these,

and yet these continue and remain. As for example, David once had a purpose or intention to build God a house or temple; but upon a discovery made unto him by God, that his will was otherwise, and that not he, but his son Solomon should do it, his purpose and intentions that way expired, and had no longer a being: yet David, after this purpose and intention of his were fallen, continued the same person, for nature and essence, which he was before. Now because that which we call an intent, or intention in created subjects, as men, has a peculiar nature or form, really distinct, as hath been said, from the subject and nature, thereof, and names and words were at first imposed upon things, according to what men generally knew or apprehended to be in them, hence it is, that these words, "intent, intention," &c. properly, and in ordinary discourse between men, signify such an act of the mind or will of the reasonable creature, which is in his power as well to let fall and lay aside, as to conceive, or raise up within him; yea, and which falleth and ceaseth constantly and of course, when the thing intended is effected. Therefore, in this strict and formal signification of the word, intentions are altogether inattributable unto God, inasmuch as all his acts and actings, in one kind or other, are *divisim et conjunctim*, jointly and severally, one and the same thing with his nature, essence, and being, as we have heretofore demonstratively proved, and that from the express principles and constant assertions of our adversaries themselves, as likewise from the doctrine concerning the nature of God, generally received amongst us, and, consequently, are not perishable, or liable to any expiration, fall, or change, upon any events, accomplishments, or effectings of things whatsoever, more than himself, or his simple essence and being. So that when with the Scriptures we ascribe intentions unto God, our meaning, with theirs also, is, that God, in and by that one great indesinent, unintermittable, inconceivable act of his, which is himself, and wherein he put forth himself from eternity, and by which he gave and gives being to all creatures, motions, and actings of creatures whatsoever successively, acteth and expresseth himself in order to the effecting or obtaining of such ends, or tilings as he is said to intend, after some such manner as men do, when they intend the effecting or procuring of what they project or desire. Therefore as men, when they intend such and such ends, are wont to levy and use means proper and likely, at least in their judgments, to effect and bring them to pass: in like manner God is said to

intend such and such things, when he providentially acteth in due order towards, and with a sufficient proportion of strength in acting for the effecting and procurement of them. And thus, and in this sense, we desire to be understood, when we affirm and hold, that God intendeth the salvation of all men without exception, in and by the death of Christ; viz. that upon the account of Christ's death, he vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men (considered as men, and before their wilful sinning that most heinous and unpardonable sin) whereby to be saved; so that if any particular person, man or woman, perish, or be not saved, the cause or reason hereof is not any want of sufficient means from God for their salvation, but their own voluntary neglect, or non-improvement of the means vouchsafed unto them in order thereunto; yea, such a neglect which they were no ways necessitated unto, neither by any decree of God, nor by any strength or subtilty of temptation from the devil, or from the world, nor yet by any weakness or strength of corruption in themselves, but which they might, all these notwithstanding, very well have prevented, and not have incurred the guilt or danger of it.

When, in the premised explication of our doctrine, we say that God did only antecedently intend the actual redemption and salvation of all men, in and by the death of Christ, and not consequently; our meaning is, that he so far, and upon such terms, intended the salvation of all men, without exception, as to vouchsafe unto *them* all sufficient grace and means for their salvation, not purposing or intending to interpose, by any providence of his, either positive or privative, but that every man, without exception, may, or might so improve or use the grace and means vouchsafed unto them, as to obtain salvation thereby; this, with the ancient fathers Chrysostom and Damascene, I call, his willing or intending the salvation of all men, antecedently. Of this intention, or will of God, the apostle speaks plainly, 1 Tim. 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. But this antecedent intention of his notwithstanding, he may and doth intend and will likewise, that whosoever shall not use the said grace and means so graciously vouchsafed unto them, so as by them truly to repent and believe, yea, and persevere thus repenting and believing unto the end, should perish everlastingly. So that, according to this latter, this consequent intention of his, he intendeth the salvation only of those who shall believe and persevere believing unto the end, and the condemnation

of all others: (we speak now of persons actually capable of faith and unbelief, not of infants, who admit of a peculiar consideration by themselves.)

This with the forementioned authors, I call his consequent will or intention. The former of these is not called his antecedent will or intention, either because it precedes the other in time or in eternity, or in worth or dignity, or the like: no precedency in any of these kinds, hath place amongst the decrees, wills, or intentions of God, which axe all equally eternal, equally honourable and worthy of him. But the reason of this denomination is, because it is so ordered, and cometh to pass by Divine dispensation, that grace and means for the obtaining of salvation, are always in the first place vouchsafed unto men, before either salvation be actually conferred upon any man that believeth, or any thing penal, I mean, spiritually penal, or any ways tending either to obduration or condemnation, be inflicted upon unbelievers, and much more before actual destruction is brought upon them. So that the latter of the said two wills or intentions in God is therefore termed consequent, because he never acteth in order to or with any tendency towards the condemnation or destruction of men, but consequently to and after such gracious actings of his which were of a saving tendency and import unto them, these being resisted or rejected by them. This distinction of the intention or will of God, into antecedent and consequent, as it hath been now opened, is founded upon clearness and expressness of Scripture in sundry places. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, &c., how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Matt, 23:37, 38. The Lord Christ, by his prophets, word, Spirit, providences, and administrations of sundry kinds, first endeavoured, and sought with much tenderness and greatness of compassion, to put the Jews into an estate and condition of peace and safety, as well temporal as spiritual, (viz. by attempting to bring them to repentance and to a holy and humble walking with their God.) So that his intention, will, or desire of their peace and safety were antecedent, *i. e.* antecedently expressed or put in execution, to his intention or will concerning their destruction, which were not expressed or executed but upon and after those gracious

applications of God unto them in order to their peace, and their rejection and contempt of them in those words, “and ye would not in which respect these may properly be termed consequent. The Scriptures abound with passages of this kind; I mean, which mention the gracious addressments of God unto men for their wealth and safety, as exhibited unto them in the first place, and his penal inflictions upon them afterwards, and not till their abuse or neglect of the said addressments of grace. See upon this account, Revel. 2:21, 22, 2 Chron. 36:15—17, Isa. 5:2, 4, 5, Ezek. 16:6—8, &c. compared with verses 35, 36, &c. (not to mention other places of like consideration, without number,) all which are clear and pregnant for the justification of the said distinction of the will of God into antecedent and consequent, according to the premised explication. The antecedent will or intention of God is frequently in authors, and with good propriety, termed his primary or principal intention or will; the other, his secondary or less principal. That antecedent intention of his we speak of, is, in respect of the subject matter of it, or things intended, the exhibition of sufficient means for salvation, absolute and unsuspended upon the actings and movings of the creature. My meaning is, that a sufficiency of grace and means for the obtaining salvation is always, and without any respect or consideration had either of the merit or demerit, worthiness or unworthiness of men, vouchsafed unto them all by God. That which I call his consequent will or intention in this kind, is in respect of the subject matter thereof or the things intended, viz. the collation of actual salvation, and so the infliction of actual condemnation or of spiritual judgments in order hereunto, suspended upon the behaviour of men: so that, for example, this intention or will of his notwithstanding, salvation is never conferred upon any man but upon his believing, and continuance in believing unto the end; nor should be conferred upon any man, in case no man should be found so to believe. Nor is condemnation or destruction, or any thing tending hereunto, inflicted upon any man but upon his neglect or abuse of the means of salvation exhibited unto him; nor should they ever be inflicted upon any man, in case no man were found neglective or abusive of the grace of God, in the means of salvation vouchsafed unto them. So that the consequent intention or will of God is of like nature and consideration with the politic laws of men, which either assign rewards to those that shall deserve well of the state where they live, in such or such a way, or decree the infliction of punishment upon

malefactors in several kinds. For as neither of these laws suppose any absolute or positive necessity that there will be any either so deserving as to have right of claim to the rewards promised, or so wicked as to incur the punishments ordained by the said laws; so neither do the consequent intentions of God suppose a determinate necessity either that there will be any who shall have right to the great reward of salvation intended by him hereby unto those that shall believe perseveringly; or any that will incur damnation by final impenitency and unbelief, although, it is true, the Scriptures otherwise suppose and declare, 1. That there will be some saved, by believing unto the end. 2. That there will be many condemned for their final impenitency and unbelief. 3. and lastly, That all persons of mankind, without exception, will either believe unto salvation, or remain impenitent to condemnation. But as the said politic laws of men are not therefore useless or impolitic, because they suppose no absolute necessity, either that there will be men found to deserve the rewards proposed in the one, or to incur the penalties imposed by the other, inasmuch as the former serve to excite and strengthen men to do worthily; and it is very probable that some will accordingly be provoked to do worthily, by the rewards promised therein ; and the latter are useful and proper to prevent the being of such persons in the state who are wont to practise such misdemeanors as are therein threatened: in like manner, though that consequent will or intention of God we speak of supposeth no necessity either that some will believe to salvation, or that any will remain unbelieving and impenitent to condemnation, yet is it through the manifestation of it unto men, of singular benefit and blessing unto the world, because in the former part of it, by means of the great recompence of reward, salvation promised therein, it is of marvellous efficacy and force to quicken men to believe, yea, and to continue believing unto the end; in the latter part of it by means of the dreadful punishment threatened therein, it is of like efficacy to awaken men out of the deep sleep of impenitency and unbelief.

Nor do we all this while, in discoursing the antecedent and consequent intention or will of God, suppose that there are two wills or intentions in God, properly so called, (no, nor yet so much as one,) much less that 'there are two contrary wills in him, the one unto the other: but intention and will are, as hath been already said, ascribed unto God in respect of his administrations or efficiencies, which have some kind of likeness with

those actings which proceed from men, when they intend or will any thing by virtue of such their intendments. So that to say that God willet or intendeth one thing with one kind of will or intention, and another either contrary to it or differing from it, with another kind of will or intention, amounts to no more, truly interpreted, than to this, that some of his dispensations have a tendency towards the producing of such and such ends; and others, towards the producing of such and such other ends, either differing from them or contrary to them. Nor doth it follow from God's acting in order to differing, yea, or contrary ends, that he is therefore divided in himself, or inconsistent with himself no more than it follows that he that mourns at one time and upon one occasion, and rejoiceth at another time and upon another occasion suitable to such a passion or expression, is inconstant or any ways contradictory to himself.

For a close of this chapter, I shall endeavour the assoiling of a special difficulty, at least as it seems to some, concerning the intentions of God. It hath been said, that "God in Scripture is said to purpose, or intend a thing, when he affordeth means that are proper and sufficient to bring it to pass, especially if he commands them to be used accordingly, this being a dispensation of like consideration with the deportment of men, who are wont to provide a sufficiency of means, at least so apprehended by them, for the effecting of what they purpose or intend. (See Chap. 3. p. 76.) Upon this explication of intentions in God, this question is moved, 'Whether, according to the purport hereof, it may not be said that he intended the offering up of Isaac by death; because, 1. By his providence he furnished Abraham with all things sufficient and necessary hereunto. And, 2, Gave an express command unto him, that he should offer him accordingly. Now if he did not intend the oblation we speak of, which by his prohibition of it by an angel before it was performed, and by means whereof it never came to be performed, he seemed not to have done, then cannot the said explication stand; nor are the intentions of God to be judged of by his vouchsafement of means proper for the production of an effect, no, not though he commands them to be used in order thereunto. To this I answer,

1. That the intention of God in commanding Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, having otherwise furnished him with means sufficient hereunto, was a thorough trial of Abraham's love and faith, not the actual offering

up of Isaac by death. This is evident from Gen. 22: 1, and Heb. 11:17, &c., compared.

2. In order to the accomplishment of this his intention, he commands Abraham to "Take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and to offer him for a burnt offering," &c., Gen. 22:3. Therefore,

3. This command of God unto Abraham concerning the offering of his son, is none otherwise, nor in any other sense, to be understood as directed by God unto him, than as Abraham's obedience or disobedience to it was, or might be a sufficient trial either of the soundness or unsoundness of his faith and love towards God. So then,

4. The soundness and sincerity of Abraham's faith and love, being sufficiently tried and discovered by a discovery of his readiness and willingness to obey the said command of God, and to offer up his son, and this discovery being sufficiently made by that which Abraham did towards the offering up of his son by death, though he was not actually thus offered up by him, it roundly follows, that the meaning of the command given unto Abraham in the case in hand, was not that he should actually offer up his son by death, but that he should proceed so far towards the offering him up in that manner, until his willingness thereunto were sufficiently manifested, and himself (God I mean) take him off, and stay his hand from acting further herein. Such constructions or forms of speech wherein the consequent is put for the antecedent, and so, again, where the end or effect is named to signify the means proper for the procurement of either, are familiar and frequent with the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures. An instance of the former we have, Psa. 22:26, in this clause, "They that seek the Lord shall praise him," *i. e.* they shall be graciously entreated by him, and receive good from him, and hereby be occasioned or provoked to praise him. So Deut. 10:17, "taking rewards" is put for doing unjustly, which commonly follows upon "taking rewards." So again, to "make the first-born," signifies the conferring of the inheritance, or a double portion, upon a person, this being a usual consequent of primogeniture to carry the inheritance, or a double portion, Deut. 21:16. So to "be wicked," or "vile," signifies to be guilty, or liable to punishment, 1 Kings 1:21; guilt, or obnoxiousness unto punishment, being a consequent of wickedness. To pass by many other places of like construction, instances of the latter are frequent also. Thus, "salvation" is put for the Scriptures, or knowledge of God, as being the



means of salvation, John 4:22, "For salvation is of the Jews." Upon a like account, Peter exhorteth men to "count the long-suffering of the Lord" towards them "salvation," *i. e.* a means of salvation, 2 Pet.3:15. See more places of like character, Rom. 14:20; 1 Tim. 4:16; Deut. 13:5, according to the original, &c. According to either of these constructions, the command of God unto Abraham to "offer up his son Isaac for a burnt-offering," may import only a doing of such things which were precedaneously necessary to an "offering him up" after such a manner, as, viz. to provide wood and fire for the burning of him, a knife for the slaying of him, a cord, or the like, wherewith to bind him, an altar on which to lay him, and so again, actually to lay the wood provided upon the altar, for the burning of him, actually to bind him, to take the knife into his hand, to stretch forth his hand with the knife in it with an intent to slay him. All these things, with the like, being requisite to the actual offering up of Isaac by death, might well be signified, and doubtless were signified, yea, and were all that was signified or meant by that command of God, so oft mentioned, unto Abraham, concerning the offering up his son. Therefore,

5. Look, what God commanded Abraham to do about the offering up of his son, that he really intended he should do, yea, and Abraham did it accordingly. He commanded Abraham to offer up his son ; and in such a sense as he commanded, Abraham obeyed, the Scripture testifying thus of him, in these words, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son," Heb. 11:17. Therefore certainly God commanded Abraham no other kind of offering up Isaac than that which Abraham performed, and what himself really intended that he should perform. Whether Abraham at first understood the command of God in such a sense as that wherein we have now interpreted it, is not material. By that inhibition which was served upon him by the angel, to surcease all further proceedings in and about the offering up of his son by death, before he was thus offered, he clearly enough understood that to have been the sense and mind of God in the said command, which we have asserted. So that,

6, and lastly, It is a clear case, that the explication and account, given formerly in this treatise, concerning the intentions of God, or rather concerning the ground and reason why intentions are attributed unto him, is no ways encumbered or disabled by the instance of God's command given unto Abraham concerning the offering up of Isaac,

notwithstanding Isaac's non-oblation by death. There is nothing in this example to prove that God doth at any time vouchsafe means competent and proper for the bringing of any thing to pass, especially when he commands that these means be used accordingly, but that he truly and really intends, as he is capable of intending any thing, the coming to pass thereof.

Nor can it here, with any face of reason, be replied, that, by such a construction as we have put upon the words of God in his command unto Abraham concerning the offering up of his son, when he vouchsafeth means of salvation unto men, and commandeth them to use them accordingly, it cannot be concluded from thence, that, therefore, he really intendeth the salvation of men, but only that they should use the said means to obtain salvation; because, though God, in Abraham's case, did, in his intentions, separate the means of offering up Isaac from the actual oblation of him, this not being the end of his command given unto him, as was said,—yet he did not separate between the said means and that which was his true end in the command, which was the trial of Abraham's faith; and for the effecting whereof, the said command, and all that which was meant thereby, was as natural and proper a means as it was for the actual oblation of Isaac by death. In like manner, when he vouchsafeth means of salvation unto men, and commandeth the use of them accordingly, he cannot be supposed to divide or separate, in his intentions, between the use of these means and their proper end, salvation; there being no other end proper to be effected by the use of the means of salvation but salvation itself, or, at least, none but in conjunction with salvation. And certain it is, that there is no man of wisdom who intends the use of such means, which are determinately appropriate to the production of one end, and no more; or, however, of no more, but only by and through the production of that one, but that he intends the production of this end peculiarly. How God may intend the salvation of men, and yet men never come to be saved, hath been already explained, Chap. 3. p. 76, 86, and that, as I remember, more than once, and may be yet further opened upon occasion.

## CHAPTER 18.

**Exhibiteth several grounds and reasons whereby the universality of redemption by Christ, or Christ's dying for all men, without exception, is demonstratively evicted.**

ALTHOUGH Scripture authority be greater than all demonstration otherwise, for the eviction and confirmation of any doctrine or tenet in matter of religion, as simply and in itself, so also with those whose faith mainly or solely beareth upon the foundations of the Scriptures, yet have arguments and grounds of reason, if they be pregnant and clear, a very acceptable influence upon the judgments and consciences of men, when they are levied and drawn up in the nature of seconds or assistants to the Scriptures, and plead the same cause with them. For when a doctrine or opinion is held forth as the mind of God in the Scriptures, and Scripture authority produced and insisted upon, either singly or in consort, for the proof thereof; in case this doctrine shall be found to have a fair and clear consistence with the unquestionable principles of sound reason, there remains no place in the consciences of men for fear or jealousy, concerning the truth thereof. God himself being the author of those noble endowments in men, reason and understanding, must needs be conceived the author also of whatsoever truly consorteth with them. But in case the authority of the Scripture shall be urged and pressed upon the consciences of men in defence of such a doctrine, which grates or hears hard upon the common and clear dictates of that light which God hath planted in the souls of men, it is impossible but that a considering man should much question such a sense or interpretation which is put upon the Scriptures in such a case. The reason hereof hath been given elsewhere. The premises considered, I judge it a matter of signal consequence in order to the securing the judgments and consciences of men about the truth of the main doctrine maintained in this discourse, to demonstrate the perfect and clear consistency of it with grounds of reason, though substantially proved already from the Scriptures; yea, and satisfactorily also, I trust, unto those who so understand the Scriptures as not to make either the wisdom or justice of God sufferers by them. My reasons, then, for the universality of redemption by Jesus Christ, in

reference unto men, are these following :

If Christ died not for all men without exception, in the sense formerly declared, then is that great covenant of grace, which God hath made with the world, and ratified in his blood, made with unknown persons, and such who are no ways expressed in this covenant, neither by name nor by any other character or qualification by which they may, at least for a long time, be known or distinguished : But this great covenant we speak of is not struck, or made with unknown persons; I mean with such who, for along time, if ever, neither can tell themselves whether they be the covenanted or no, nor are capable of any reasonable information hereof by others: Therefore, Christ died for all men, without exception.”

The reason of the former proposition, and the consequence therein, is this: because the elect, so called in the common notion of election, with whom only this covenant of grace is pretended to be made, and for whom only Christ is supposed to have died, are persons no ways distinguishable from others, neither before, at all, and very hardly, if at all, after their regeneration and conversion unto God. That they are not at all discernible from others, before conversion, is evident from several places. “For we ourselves,” saith the apostle to Titus, meaning, who are now so much altered and changed by a work of grace and regeneration in us, “were sometimes,” viz., before our conversion, “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another,” Tit. 3:3. Certainly, these are no appropriate or distinguishing characters of the elect, but such, which do evidently prove the elect, in the common signification of the word, before conversion, and the non-elect, to be indiscernible the one from the other, as well by themselves as by others. We shall not need to cite any more places for the proof of this. You may peruse the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians at your leisure, which speaks, almost throughout, to this point. Again,

2. That after regeneration itself, the elect, so called, are very hardly, if at all, discernible, either to themselves or others, from hypocrites and those that shall perish, is no less evident neither. First. That they are not at all discernible from hypocrites, in respect of others, at least for a time, and many times for a long time, will, I suppose, readily be acknowledged. The apostles did not know Judas to be a hypocrite or a traitor, no not after long acquaintance and converse with him; for then they would not

have suspected every man himself, when Christ told them that there was one of them that would betray him. Nor did Philip know Simon Magus to be “in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,” when he baptized him; nor Paul, Demas, whilst he made him his companion. And how should others infallibly know who are elect and shall be saved, when, as the Lord Christ saith, that “many that are first shall be last;” *i. e.* many that for a time march in the head of profession, and make a show of more zeal and forwardness in the ways of religion than other men, yet wheel off again to the world, and become like “salt which hath lost its savour, and is good for nothing but to be thrown upon the dunghill and trodden under foot by men.” Again, 2. That such persons as we speak of, the elect, I mean such who shall actually be saved, at least a great part of them, are not able always, no, nor ordinarily, after the work of regeneration in them, to distinguish or discern themselves from those who shall perish, is abundantly confirmed, partly by the continual fears, jealousies, and doubtings of their spiritual condition, wherewith many of them are exercised even to their dying day: partly also by those great and good opinions which they have of others, as being worthy and sound Christians, who yet afterwards “turn back with the dog unto their vomit, and with the swine that hath been washed to her wallowing in the mire.” So that the truth of the major proposition is unquestionable; viz. that if Christ died not for all men without exception, but for the elect only, then is the covenant of grace in his blood made with unknown persons, such who neither can certainly say of themselves, nor any for them, that they are the covenanted ones.

As to the minor proposition, the truth hereof is evident also. The tenor of it was this: That the covenant of grace is not struck or made with unknown persons, or such concerning whom it is either impossible or next to impossibility to know plainly and certainly who they are. It is contrary to the nature and intent of a covenant, especially of a covenant of grace, that the parties interested in it, and whom the covenant concerns and relates unto, should not be discernible or known from all other persons whatsoever, or that it should minister any occasion of controversy or debate who these persons should be. Look into all covenants that are drawn up and made between man and man, and you shall find, for the most part, the names of the covenanted as well as of the covenanters expressed in them; or, howsoever, if all their names be not

expressed, yet are they sufficiently declared otherwise, as viz. by such and such characters, relations, or the like, whereby they may be as plainly known as if their names themselves were mentioned. As for example : When one man covenanteth with another who is named in the covenant, and with his heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, these words of relation do as plainly and clearly point out the persons intended and meant as if they had been expressed by their names. Yea, doubtless, the reason why these persons are usually expressed by such terms of relation, and not by their names, in covenants between men, is, because neither of the covenanting parties, at the time of the making of the covenant, knew or were able to call them by their names; which cannot be said of God in his covenant of grace, inasmuch as all men's names were known unto him when he made this covenant with the world. Look into the Scriptures; in all the covenants specified and recorded here, you will find the persons covenanted with either named or else so described that there is no place left for any doubt who they be. When Caleb made this covenant, proffered these terms: "He that smiteth Kiriath-Sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife," Josh. 15:16, it is and was easy enough to conceive who they were with whom this covenant was made, viz. all the people or men that were with him, expressed in that pronoun "he," which in the dialect of the Scripture hath the signification and force of the universal particle "whosoever;" as, "He that believeth," i. e. whosoever believeth, "shall he be saved," Mark 16:16. So in that of our Saviour, John 6:37, "Him that cometh unto me," i. e. whosoever cometh unto me, "I will in no wise cast out;" with many the like. A like covenant or offer of grace it seems that Saul also made upon occasion of the affront which the giant-like Philistine, Goliath, put upon him and his whole army: "And it shall be that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel," 1 Sam. 17:15. It is evident, likewise, in this covenant, who the persons were that were covenanted with upon the terms mentioned, viz. all the persons, without exception, in Saul's army. I choose rather to give instance in such covenants as these, because they are of the same form and tenor, mutatis mutandis, as lawyers use to say, with the covenant of grace itself, which is founded in the blood of Jesus Christ. But the like is every whit as apparent in other covenants also, as you may please to consider at your leisure.

Again, 2, If we weigh the end or intent of a covenant, we shall clearly find that this requires a determinate and clear knowledge or a distinct designation of the parties covenanting or covenanted with. The principal and main end or intent of a covenant, is, to insure unto the party or parties covenanted with such and such terms or things as are specified in the covenant according to the tenor and conditions thereof. Mark, the end of a covenant is not the simple collation or donation of any thing to a person, one or more, but the securing or insuring persons that such and such things shall be given unto them, or conferred upon them, upon the performance of such and such conditions as the covenant specifies. And this, clearly and without controversy, is the end (I mean, the proper and immediate end, for there are several ends besides this) of the covenant of grace established in the blood of Christ, viz. to give assurance unto the sons and daughters of men, that upon their faith and repentance, and their perseverance in both unto the end, they shall have salvation and eternal life conferred upon them. If so be a man hath an absolute, unlimited, and right-out purpose or intent to confer such or such things upon men, a covenant is but an unsavoury and superfluous thing; because a man may confer or give what he pleaseth to another without it. So if God had a simple and absolute intention to confer the great things of heaven upon men, I mean, without the performance of such and such articles or conditions as we speak of, the making of a covenant with them had been in vain. Therefore, the proper end of a covenant is to assure or to secure those that are covenanted with, that upon the performance of the articles of the covenant, the good things mentioned therein, if it be a covenant of good things, shall be exhibited and given unto them. Now, then, this being the end of a covenant, if the persons interested and concerned in it, or covenanted with, should not be known who they are, they cannot partake of this end, nor be any whit the better or more secure in their minds touching the enjoyment of the good things mentioned in the covenant upon any performance whatsoever; because the good things mentioned in a covenant cannot be claimed or expected by any but only by the persons covenanted with, though they should perform the terms or conditions specified in the covenant ten times over. "If the trumpet," saith the apostle, "give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" 1 Cor. 14:8. In like manner, if the covenant of grace speaks unto persons unknown both to themselves and others,

and holds forth life and salvation only unto such, both men and women, as no man can say or tell who they be, how shall any man or woman be excited, provoked, or engaged, either by the tender of the covenant unto them, or by the great and excellent things therein promised conditionally, to “take hold of the covenant,” as the Scripture speaketh, *i. e.* to perform the conditions therein required ?

If it he said, Yes, the covenant is to be preached, and tendered unto all, without exception of any ; and assurance is therein given unto all, that upon performance of what is there required, the good things there promised shall be given unto them. So that there is ground and encouragement enough howsoever, for every man and woman without exception to believe. To this I answer,

It is true, the covenant is to be preached and tendered unto all, without exception; and there is ground and encouragement enough for every man without exception to believe: but both these clearly suppose, that the covenant is made with all men, without exception of any; and consequently that the death or blood of Christ, which is the ground-work and foundation of this covenant, extendeth unto all. No covenant offereth any thing, insureth any thing, upon what terms soever, but only unto those that are covenanted with and comprehended in the covenant. When a man covenanteth with such or such a workman, to give him so much or so much, as suppose five or ten shillings by the day, this covenant doth not bind him to give the like wages to another. What is the reason why the covenant of grace, or the gospel, doth not offer or insure grace and salvation to the devils, as well as to all manner of men whatsoever upon their believing? Doubtless, because the devils are not within the number of the covenanted ones, nor of those unto whom grace and mercy were intended upon the terms of the gospel: and this because the death of Christ, which is the ground of the covenant, doth not in the atoning virtue of it reach unto them; the sphere of whose activity (in this kind) is limited and hounded by the will and pleasure of God. And certainly, if reprobates (so called amongst men) I mean such who in fine perish everlastingly, had no more interest than the devils have in the death of Christ, there were no more ground or reason why the covenant, or the grace thereof, should be more preached unto them, than to the devils: nay, there were less reason of the two, why it should be preached unto them, than why it should be preached to the devils, (at least according to the principles of



that opinion which we oppose,) because, if preached to the devils, though it did them no good, it would do them no harm, it would not increase their condemnation; whereas the preaching it to such men as we speak of, can only increase their misery and torment. This for our first argument. If Christ died not for all, then is the covenant in his blood made but with some men, and these altogether unknown even to themselves; which (as hath been shown) is contrary to the nature, end, and scope of a covenant.

I shall not trouble the reader with that impertinent objection, and uncouth notion, of Christ's being the only person with whom the covenant is made. What other covenant soever may be found to have been made by God with Christ, certainly that covenant we speak of, viz. wherein remission of sins, and deliverance from the wrath to come, are promised upon repentance and believing in Christ, was not made with Christ himself. God never said unto Christ, Repent and believe, and thou shalt have thy sins forgiven, and be saved. Therefore the covenant made with Christ, if any such thing be or were, is altogether irrelative to our present argument. Nor doth that of the apostle, Gal. 3:16, prove that Christ, in a personal consideration, is the only person, or, indeed, any person at all, with whom the evangelical covenant is made. The tenor of the place is this: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many : but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." First, it is evident from this place, that Christ is not the only person to whom the promises here spoken of are made; because they are expressly said to be made to Abraham, as well as to Christ. "Now to *Abraham*, and his seed were the promises made," &c. Therefore, 2. The word Christ (in the latter clause) is to be taken metonymically, for those who spiritually descend from him, and are horn of him by faith; in such a sense as the words Jacob and Israel frequently signify Jacob's seed or posterity, *i. e.* the whole nation of the Jews, in the Old Testament. In such a sense the same word also, Christ, is to be understood, 1 Cor. 12:12. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body; so also is Christ *i. e.* so also is it with believers, who in respect of their spiritual being, are from Christ; meaning, that though they be many personally distinct, yet they make one spiritual or mystical body with Christ their head. Now when the promises are said to be made to Abraham, and his spiritual seed, believers; the meaning is not, as if they were so, or upon such terms made

to them, that none but they had any right to receive them, or believe them: for then it must follow, that men must or ought to be believers before they receive or believe the promises, which is impossible. But the promises are made to Abraham and his seed, *i. e.* the great inheritance of life and salvation promised by God, is promised as touching the actual exhibition or collation of it unto believers only, such as Abraham himself was, and such as those who desire to be accounted his seed must be. But this supposeth not but that the said promises are, in this sense, made to Adam and his seed, *i. e.* to all mankind, *viz.* that all and every person of mankind, as well as Adam, yea, or Abraham himself, have a right to believe them, so that in case they should believe them, they should do no unjust or unrighteous thing. Nay, they have not only a right, but a grand necessity likewise lying upon them to believe them, as well in respect of the commandment of God, who commands no unjust or unrighteous thing, as of their own eternal peace and safety, whereof they will certainly make shipwreck, unless they do believe them.

A second demonstration, whereby Christ's dying for all men is evinced, is this: "If Christ died not for all men without exception, then he died for the elect only: But he died not for the elect only: therefore for all men without exception." I presume the former proposition will be granted without further proof; because they who deny that Christ died for all, generally suppose and grant that he died for some, and by name for the elect, and, indeed, for these only. So that if it be proved, either that he died not for the elect at all, or not for the elect only, then, according to their own principles and grounds, it follows that he died for all. Now then, that he died not for the elect, and much more not for the elect only, which was the minor proposition, appears thus. If the state and condition of the elect were such, that Christ needed no more to die for them, than he needed to die for the holy and elect angels, then Christ died not for these, much less for these only: But the state and condition of the elect was such, that there was no more need that Christ should die for them, than for the elect angels: Ergo. In this argument, I reason, I confess, upon my adversaries' grounds, not mine own, concerning election: but howsoever, such a process of arguing as this is very serviceable for the confirmation of a truth in opposition to an error ; and the apostle Paul himself sometimes useth it in a like case, as 1 Cor. 15:29. The major proposition in this last argument, standeth upon this ground, that there

was no need that Christ should die for the holy or elect angels. I suppose this will not be denied or doubted of by any; but however it is clearly enough asserted by the apostle, in that saying, of his, Gal. 2:21, "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness" *i. e.* justification, "come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," *i. e.* without any necessity or reasonable cause moving thereunto. But now, if there had been a necessity that Christ should have died for the elect angels, it would not have followed that his death had been in vain, though men might have been justified by the law. Therefore if there were no more reason, no more need why Christ should die for the elect of men, than for the elect angels, certainly he did not die for them, much less for them only. But now that there was no more reason, no more need why Christ should die for the elect of men, than for the elect angels, which was the substance of the minor proposition, appears by this double consideration: 1. Because God loved the elect, I mean the elect of men, and that as such, as elect, without any consideration had of Christ's dying for them, with as great a love as he did the elect angels, yea, with as great as it was possible for him to bear to them. 2. Because salvation and eternal glory were decreed and adjudged to them, and consequently were made truly and properly theirs, in and by God's purpose in electing them. God, in electing them without any consideration or respect had unto Jesus Christ's dying or to die, for them, or unto their believing in him, did irreversibly appropriate and consign over unto them eternal life. From these two grounds it follows undeniably, that there was no more need for Christ to die for the elect of mankind, than for the elect angels. For,

1. If God loved the elect of men with as great a love as he loves the elect angels, or as he is capable of bearing towards them, what occasion, what necessity was there that Christ should die for the one more than for the other ? The same love affords the same favours, the same privileges, without any mediation to equalize it in this kind. If God loved the elect of men as much, as intensely as the holy angels, considered only as elect, or before their election, —for this is the notion and sense of our adversaries in the point in hand,—then the offence and distance occasioned by sin between him and them was wholly ceased and taken out of the way, before the blood of the covenant was sprinkled on them, before the atonement came at them ; as the "Hebrew women," in the story, "were delivered of their children before the midwives came at them," Exod. 1:19.

And if so, if the offence and distance caused between God and his elect, by means of sin, was swallowed up in the love of election, so that he loved them now, considered only as elect, or to be elected, as much as he did or could do upon their actual ingrafting into Christ and participation of his death, to what purpose should Christ die for them? or what profit is there in the blood of Christ as to them? God thought every whit as well of them, loved them as much, intended to do as much for them, yea, irreversibly decreed, adjudged as great things unto them before and without all consideration had of the death of Christ, as he did or could do upon the consideration of it.

2. God, out of his love of election, as the doctrine of election is commonly taught and received amongst us, did in the very act or decree of his election, freely, and of his mere good will and pleasure, irrevocably assign, adjudge, make over, and give, to his elect, justification, salvation, glorification, and what not in this kind? And if so, Christ could not die to purchase or procure these things for them; because they were truly, properly, and by right of free donation, theirs before. It were ridiculous for any friend of mine to go and lay down a great sum of money to purchase or procure that on my behalf, which I have already assured unto me by the free and stable and irrevocable gift and donation of him that hath a full right and power to give it unto me. Therefore, whereas many amongst us cry out of Socinianism as a most dangerous heresy, and the great abomination of their souls, the truth is, that themselves teach and hold as rank and right down Socinianism in their opinion about election, as the greatest Socinians themselves can do. For what is the master-vein in the body of this heresy, but to deny that Christ truly satisfied or made any atonement for sin, and that upon this ground, because God freely and of his mere grace gives forgiveness of sins unto men, without any satisfaction? And how little doth this differ from that doctrine of election, which passeth for current amongst us; teaching, that forgiveness of sins, and all the great things depending hereon, are assigned and decreed unto men in their election, without any consideration had of Christ's dying for them, or their believing in him?

If it be here said, that they who hold election in the most absolute and peremptory way, do not say or hold that God intends actually to confer remission of sins, or eternal life, upon the elect, otherwise than for and through the satisfaction made by Christ for them in his death, though

they hold that he intends, without any respect had to the consideration of Christ's death, actually to confer them upon them; they exclude the satisfaction of Christ from having any thing to do in God's purpose of election, not from having any thing to do in the execution of this his purpose; here they acknowledge it to have much to do, to be upon the matter all in all. To this we answer,

That this distinction, or explication of the opinion, doth no ways relieve it, hut rather burdens it more and more. For,

1. Certain it is, that God doth not purpose or project one way, and act or execute in another: but his executions do exactly answer the tenor, purport, and form of his purposes or intentions. Men who are subject to oversights, and consequently to repentance, may, and many times do, vary from their model or platform, when, they come to action, because some better thing, it may be, hath come in their way, than they thought upon in the first projection of their work. But nothing can come in God's way either more satisfactory, or better pleasing unto him, than what was present with him in the first contrivance or projection of his affairs. Therefore, if, in point of execution, he actually confers remission of sins and salvation upon men, because of and with respect unto the death and satisfaction of Christ, it is a certain sign that he purposed this collation of them in his purpose of election, upon no other terms; and consequently that in God's very purpose of electing men unto salvation, he had respect unto the death of Christ, yea, and to their ingrafting into him by believing; and that he never purposed salvation unto any, without interesting the death of Christ in his intentions in this kind, as well as in his executions of what he thus intends.

2. If God might intend and purpose salvation unto men, without the consideration of the death of Christ, certainly he may as well actually confer and give this salvation without any respect had thereunto. For this is a general and plain rule, that what a man may lawfully will or intend to do, without such or such a consideration, he may as lawfully act or do it without this consideration. For there is every whit as much required to justify a man in his will or purpose of doing a thing, as to justify him in his act or deed according to this will. Certainly, that which a man may lawfully will or purpose, he may lawfully do. In like manner, if God might lawfully—I mean, with the consistence of his wisdom and justice—purpose, will, or decree forgiveness of sins and salvation unto men,

without considering them as believers in Christ, he may as well actually confer these things upon them without any such consideration; and if so, the death of Christ is no ways necessary either to justify or commend either the justice or the wisdom of God in the actual justification or salvation of men. So that evident it is, that the doctrine of election, as it is ordinarily, entertained amongst us, doth abrogate the grace of God in Christ, and makes his death to be in vain. But the Scripture teacheth this doctrine upon other terms, and maketh Christ, *i. e.* the consideration of Christ, and of faith in him, the foundation of election, and that upon which God raised, as it were, and built it.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” saith the apostle, “ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” or things “ in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy,” &c. Eph. 1:3, 4. Observe these words, “according as he hath chosen us in him.” Here are two things very considerable as to our purpose, in these words. The first lies in that word, *καθώς*, “according as,” or, even as. “Who hath blessed us,” *i. e.* actually and *de facto* blessed us “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, according as,” or, even as “he hath chosen us.” This clearly shows that God’s actings, his actual and present dispensations, are adequately and exactly conformable unto his purposes or projections. God, saith the apostle to them, in effect, in all that he hath done for us by the gospel, and by Christ, as in the enlightening of us, in sanctifying of us, in justifying of us, in comforting of us, &c., hath but acted that which he had modelled and formed out for us in his purpose, or counsel of election, before the world began. The second thing to be observed in the words, is, that God is here said to have “chosen us in him,” *i. e.* in Christ, “before the foundation of the world.” How, or in what sense, is God here said to have elected or “chosen us in Christ ?” First, I suppose the apostle here speaks, not of the act, but of the purpose or decree of election or choosing. So the sense of the words, “according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world,” is this: according to that model, platform, or purpose of election, which, upon the happy advantage or opportunity he had of his Christ, and that most gracious and wise contrivement of him in order to such a purpose which was before him, he framed and made within himself from the days of eternity, or before the “foundation of the world.” The purposes or

intentions of God concerning such and such acts or dispensations, are very usually in Scripture expressed by the names of the acts or dispensations themselves, as likewise the purposes or intentions of men are after the same manner. Thus, Rom. 8:30, God is said to have glorified those whom he intends or hath decreed to glorify. Thus, also, 2 Tim. 1:9, and again, Tit. iii. 5, he is said to have saved those who were not actually saved, but only under his purpose of saving them, to omit many the like. So in the Scripture in hand, he is said to have “chosen us before the foundation of the world:” because he purposed or decreed, before the foundation of the world, to choose us. Well; but what was the nature or tenor of this purpose or decree of his concerning our election? or how, and in what sense is it said to have been in Christ, as the apostle here asserts it to have been ? According to the most usual and proper signification of the preposition *iv*, *in*, (in such a construction,) that is to be done *in* Christ, which is done by means of him, or for his sake, or by the meritorious influence or contribution of his death and sufferings, by way of motive, towards the doing of it. In this sense the preposition is used a verse or two after; a place that will give light to the phrase in hand. Εἰς ὑμῶν τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, *iv j* ἰχαρίωσιν ἡ μᾶς *iv* τῇ ἡγαπημίνῃ *i.e.* “to the praise of the glory of his grace, whereby he hath made us accepted in his beloved Eph. 1:6; *i. e.* hath made us dear, and near, and precious to himself, by means of the death, satisfaction, and atonement made by his beloved Son for us. By the way, if the grace of God itself— and that in the glory of it, in which consideration the apostle here speaks of it—doth no other ways, upon no other terms, render us accepted with him, but only in “and through his beloved,” viz. as having made our peace by the atonement of his death for us, then were we not so highly accepted with him through any purpose of election, (especially if we shall conceive this purpose of election to have been conceived in God before, and without all consideration of the death of Christ,) as the common notion of election suggesteth. So, then, God is said to have purposed our election or choosing in Christ, because his purpose was to separate, elect, and choose those who should believe in Christ, for his sake in whom they believe, to salvation. This interpretation might be much cleared and confirmed by the opening of these words, which we had not long since in hand, Rom. 9:11: “That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.”

The purpose of God according to election, *i. e.* that purpose, counsel, or decree of God, according unto which, or in conformity whereunto he ordereth and manageth his election of persons in time, is here described, 1. Negatively, “not of works.” 2. Affirmatively, in these words, “but of him that calleth.” When the apostle denies “the purpose of God according to election” to be of works, his meaning clearly is, that God did not purpose to elect, separate, or choose those men to eternal life, who should seek their justification by the works of the law. Again, when he affirmeth this purpose of God according to election to be of him that calleth, (meaning, of God himself, who calleth men to justification and salvation,) his meaning as clearly is, that the tenor of God’s purpose, according unto which he means to elect and choose men and women to eternal life, is this ; viz. to make choice of those for this blessed end and purpose, who shall believe in his Son Jesus Christ, or seek their justification by faith. This purpose is said to be “of him that calleth,” in opposition to a being “of works;” because a purpose according to election, which should be of works, is the purpose of them that are called, viz. men; they conceive and think, that God should purpose and intend to choose those only unto life, who should be diligent observers of the law, and seek their justification that way : but now “the purpose of God according to election,” is not formed or shaped according to the sense or notion of those that are called, who generally pitch upon works, but according to the sense and mind of God himself, who calleth ; who, as we know, hath declined works for such a purpose, and hath chosen faith. So that the apostle’s meaning in this antithesis, “not of works, but of him that calleth,” is plainly this, “not of works,” but of faith; faith and works being famous antagonists or competitors in the writings of this apostle for justification, the one as set up by God, the other by men. The same interpretation of the phrase, “who hath chosen us in Christ,” may be yet further strengthened by that in Peter. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. 1:2. First, he saluteth them as persons elect, or chosen, “according to the foreknowledge” (or preapprobation, as we have formerly observed the word frequently to signify) “of God the Father *i. e.* as persons so qualified, or as having obtained such an estate and condition, wherein “God the Father” from eternity judged it meet to “elect” or choose the persons of men unto salvation, or to estimate and



account men meet or worthy eternal life. In this sense he terms them “elect according to the foreknowledge,” or fore-approbation, “of God; meaning that their present condition in believing did, according to the tenor of the eternal counsel and purpose of God in that behalf, separate between them and the generality of the world, who in respect of their unbelief were looked upon by him and adjudged as the refuse of men in comparison of them, and in their present posture unmeet to have salvation conferred upon them.

2. He particularly describeth what that qualification or condition is, which God foreknew or fore-approved, as meet for him to regulate his election of the persons of men by, and wherein now they were invested, and consequently, “elected,” in those words, “through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling,” &c. His meaning is, that they, through the assistance and gracious co-operation of the Spirit of God, were now brought to yield obedience unto the gospel, to believe in Jesus Christ, as he who by his death had purchased remission of sins for them, &c. implying that such an estate and condition as this, sanctification by the Spirit, &c. is that very estate wherein what person or persons of men soever should at any time be found, God in his eternal counsel judged it meet to confer the honourable title of “elect,” or chosen, together with the grace and privilege of justification, upon them. So that to choose us in Christ, doth not signify to choose us personally considered with Christ, or in the same act of election wherein or wherewith Christ was chosen, or the like, but to intend, purpose, or decree to choose us, as being, or when we should be in Christ by believing. Having once obtained this being, a being in Christ by faith, we may truly and in good propriety of speaking be said to be chosen, by means or by virtue of that purpose or decree of election which was in God “before the foundations of the world” whereby he decreed to choose all those unto salvation, how many or how few soever they should prove, who should at any time be found in Christ by faith. In such a sense, Othniel, having smitten and taken Kirjath-Sepher, may be said to have been made Caleb’s son-in-law, by virtue of that declaration, law, or promise, which Caleb had made before, viz. that “Whosoever should smite Kirjath-Sepher, and take it, to him he would give Achsa his daughter to wife,” Judg. 1:12. In such a sense likewise all those of Aaron’s posterity, who came to be priests, though many generations after, may be said to have attained this office and dignity by

virtue of the law concerning persons admitable into this office, which was enacted and made by God long before. The Scripture itself ascribeth a virtue or power unto the law to make priests. “For the law *maketh men high priests*, which have infirmity,” Heb. 7:28. In like manner, that law, purpose, or decree of election, wherein and whereby God before the foundations of the world determined to choose all those that should believe in Christ, may be said to make all those elect or chosen who do thus believe: yea, and God himself, by means of this his purpose or decree, may be said to have elected or chosen all those who do at any time believe, “from before the foundations of the world.” Thus we have done with our second argument, wherein we have fairly and clearly proved, 1. That Christ needed not to die at all for the elect, in the common notion of the word elect. 2. That he did not die for the elect only, in any sense or notion of the said word whatsoever; and consequently, that he died for all men.

A third demonstration of the point is this: “If Christ died not for all men, then are not all men bound to believe in him or on him for salvation, or as a Saviour: But all men are bound to believe on him for salvation: Ergo. The reason of the major proposition is clearly this: no man is bound to lay out his silver for that which is not bread; nor to stay himself, with any confidence or assurance, upon any person whatsoever, for help or succour in any kind, concerning whom he knoweth not whether he hath wherewith to help him or no. Therefore, except all men had a sufficient ground to believe that there is redemption and salvation for them in Jesus Christ, they were not bound to believe on him as a Saviour, or to depend upon him for salvation. And if men have a sufficient ground to believe that there is redemption and salvation for them in Christ, and that if they come unto him for it, they shall partake of it, then must it needs be a truth, that he hath these tilings for them indeed, and consequently that he died for them: because no man can have a sufficient ground to believe that which is not, or that which is false. This proposition is so plain, so obvious to every man’s capacity and understanding, yea, to common sense itself, that I cannot well suspect the least question or doubt in any about the truth of it: If Christ died not for all men, then are not all men bound to believe on him for salvation.

Notwithstanding, if any shall object and say, It is true, if Christ died not sufficiently for all men, all men were not bound to believe in him for

salvation; but we grant that in this sense, viz. sufficiently, he did die for all men. And this is a sufficient ground to oblige all men to believe on him for salvation, though he died not intentionally for them. To this I answer,

1. By demanding what men mean in saying that Christ died sufficiently for all men, in opposition to his dying intentionally for them? If they say, they mean that the death of Christ, simply and in itself considered, was or is sufficient to redeem and save all men, as well as those who are redeemed and saved by it, but was not intended by God or by Christ, for any such end or purpose as the redemption of all; I answer ; if so, then was that redundancy or overplus of merit or atonement in the death of Christ, which remains over and above what is necessary for the redemption of those, for whom it was intended, and who are actually redeemed by it, suffered by God to run to waste, and to be “like water spilt upon the ground.” And if so, then was there but a very small quantity or proportion of the worth and value of the death of Christ intended by God for use, or to do either himself or his creature any service, in comparison of what vanisheth into the air, and is thrown behind his back, as good for nothing. For if there be a sufficiency in it for all those who are not redeemed by it, these being a far greater number than those who are, or are supposed to be actually redeemed by it; it must needs follow, that if that proportion of it, which was sufficient for them, was not designed or intended *by* God for them, that far the greater part of it was designed by him unto vanity, and to no more honour than that which is not. Thus we see how they that deny the death of Christ for all men intentionally, and yet grant it sufficiently, count “the blood of the covenant,” at least the far greatest part of it, as “an unholy thing,” as that which is consecrated to no holy use, end, or purpose; yea, and that which is yet worse, make God himself and Jesus Christ, the drawers or makers up of this account to their hand.

If they reply and say, That that remainder of the value and price of the death of Christ, though it was not intended by God for the salvation of those who are not actually redeemed by him, yet was intended for their condemnation, and so not lost; I answer, that this is yet worse and more unreasonable than the other. For, 1. Might not men as reasonably say, that God made the sun, and put him into the midst of the firmament of heaven, to bring night and darkness upon the world, as that he gave his Son Jesus Christ unto death for the condemnation of the world? “ For

God sent not his Son," saith Christ himself, " into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him should be saved," John 3:17. And elsewhere, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world," John 12:47. And John the Baptist clearly expresth the end and intent of Christ's death, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," John 1:29. Men may as well say that the end and intent of the sacrifices offered up by the priests under the law, was not to make atonement for men, or to purge them, but to bring more guilt upon them, as say that the intent of Christ in sacrificing himself was not to save, but condemn men. 2. It is not the manner of God, nor is it agreeable either with his wisdom or his goodness to make things proper and fitting for the bringing to pass of good and gracious ends, and then to consign them over to the effecting of ends of a quite contrary nature and import, as, *v. g.* to create wholesome and savoury meats, which are apt and proper to nourish and make the lives of men comfortable to them, and to design these, being thus created, to the destruction or discomfort of the lives of men. Indeed, when men abuse their tables, and are unthankful to him that spread them for them, it is agreeable with his wisdom, and no ways disagreeing with his goodness, to make them to become snares unto them. And in this sense only are all those places and expressions in the Scriptures to be understood where any thing penal, or that is contrary to the peace and comfort of men, is presented as the end of Christ's coming into or going out of the world by death: as where he saith that he "came not to bring peace, but a sword," and to "put fire on earth that he "came for judgment into the world that he "was set as well for the falling as for the rising of many in Israel;" with the like. All such sayings as these import only the event or secondary intentions of God in sending Christ into the world, not those which were primary and predominant in him; or, to speak properly, they do not import any intention at all on God's part, in or about the sending of Christ into the world but only show partly how unworthily some men will or possibly may behave themselves towards Christ, being come into the world; partly, what the intentions of God are concerning those who shall behave themselves thus unworthily towards him. See what hath been formerly delivered in upon this account, and subscribed by Calvin himself, Chap, 5., page 140. If it he yet further said, Yea, hut if God had had an intent to save though but a smaller number than now he intends to save, yet he could not have saved them by

a sacrifice of less value and merit than that by which he now intendeth to save those who shall be saved by Christ, and consequently not by a sacrifice of less value than that which hath in it a great surplusage or redundancy of merit above what was barely necessary or sufficient to save those whose salvation was intended. Therefore, this overplus of merit cannot be said to be lost or to be cast aside by God as unserviceable, inasmuch as it is essential unto, and absolutely inseparable from, that sacrifice which was simply necessary for the salvation of those whom he intended to save. As, suppose two or three men were in such a strait for meat to eat, being ready to perish through extremity of hunger, and could make no provision for their lives but only by slaying of an ox or a sheep that came in their way, and, when they had slain them, could not tell what to do with nine parts of ten of them; in this case, so much of the flesh of this ox or sheep as these men knew not how to dispose of to any serviceable end, cannot properly therefore be said to be lost, or to be cast aside by them as good for nothing, because it was a natural part of that beast which they were necessitated to slay for the preservation of their lives. To this objection also we answer,

1.1. By way of concession: It is true, if God had intended to save but the one half, or had it been a far less proportion than so, of those persons, men and women, who now shall be saved, he could not have done it in that way of wisdom and justice wherein he now intends to save men by any sacrifice or atonement of less value than hath now been offered for those who shall be saved, and, consequently, which should not have had an overplus and redundancy of merit in it sufficient to save many millions of persons besides those who in such a case, and under such a supposition, should be saved by it. But,

1.2. I answer further, by way of exception, That, notwithstanding this, if God should have given such a sacrifice or atonement for the saving of a few only, which was sufficient to save more, yea all, without exception, and not intended the saving of all those who were capable of salvation by it, he should voluntarily and without any necessity at all, nay, contrary to the importunate cries of the extreme misery of so many thousands in his ears, have made frustrate and void the far greatest and richest part of that sacrifice or atonement. As, suppose in the instance given of the men that in an exigent were necessitated to slay the ox or sheep spoken of for the preservation of their lives: it is true, they could not be charged with

spoiling or making waste of that which remained of the flesh of either besides what was sufficient for themselves, simply because they slew the ox for their own necessity, being in a condition of imminent danger of their lives otherwise; but suppose there had been many poor souls hard at hand in as much danger of starving as themselves, in case they had refused or neglected to have given unto them of the remaining flesh we speak of, and would rather have buried it under ground, where they might not find it, or make it any ways unfit for meat and nourishment unto them; in this case they might justly be charged with making spoil and waste of that flesh which remained unto them when themselves had eaten, and that upon terms of the greatest unmercifulness and unworthiness. In like manner do they, who acknowledge the death of Christ sufficient for all, and yet affirm it to be given or intended by God only to some few, charge him, and that upon terms of much unworthiness and very dishonourable to him, to evacuate or make of no use or effect the far greatest part of this death, there being so many millions of souls before him in the utmost extremity of misery, to whom it might, and that with double and treble honour both to his wisdom and goodness, be disposed. Therefore, certainly, if the death of Christ was sufficient for all, it was intended by God for all. But,

2. Suppose it were granted that Christ died sufficiently for all, yet unless it be granted withal, that he died intentionally for all, the sufficiency of his death is no sufficient ground for all men, nor indeed for any man, to believe on him, or to cast themselves upon him, for salvation. Nabal was a rich man, and had sufficient to have relieved David and his men in their necessity, and his sheep-shearers too. But yet David and his men had no sufficient ground to depend upon him for relief in their extremity; nor is it like they would have repaired to him for relief, if they had known his churlish and inhuman disposition before. In like manner that opinion which represents God as minding only, and intending the salvation of a few peculiarly relating to him by a purpose of election, in the death of Christ, but altogether averse from so much as hearing of the saving of all others thereby, what doth it else but dissolve and loose all bonds of engagement or obligation upon men, to believe on Christ, or on God through Christ for salvation? For who is bound to seek water from a flint, or to repair to thorns in hope to gather grapes from them? For they who deny that God intendeth the salvation of all men by Christ, represent

him to the generality of men upon no better terms of comparison, than of a flint to him that wanteth water, and of thorns to him whose soul lusteth after grapes.

If it be said, Yes, there is reason and ground sufficient for all men without exception to believe on Christ for salvation, though it be not supposed that he died for all men. Because the promise of God howsoever is general and free unto all: Whosoever believes on him shall be saved. To this I answer;

It is true, the promise is general and free unto all; and this generality and freeness of the promise plainly sheweth the generality and freeness of the salvation promised to all men, to be commensurable with the promise, and extensible to as many as it. Otherwise the ministers of the gospel shall be found liars and false witnesses. For if they shall promise salvation unto all men, in case they shall believe, when as there is no salvation for far the greatest part of men, whether they believe or not believe, or in case they should believe, for their believing or not believing doth not alter the intentions of God in the death of Christ, nor multiply salvation, do they not undertake more in the behalf of God than God himself, according to their notion, is able or willing to perform? But this point we have debated more liberally in the seventh chapter of this book.

If it be yet said; Yea, but God who orders and frames their commission, may without danger will them to preach and promise salvation, to all that will believe, though salvation be not purchased for all men, because he knows beforehand that those only will believe for whom there is salvation purchased in the death of Christ. To this I answer;

If God had kept his intentions in this kind to himself, and had not declared that he intended salvation only to a few, there might be some more colour or pretence for such a plea. If he had not let the world know any thing, but that he really intended the salvation of them all, though he should in the meantime have intended but the salvation of a very few, be might with far less dishonour, at least for the present, cause the heralds of his grace, his ministers I mean, to make such a general proclamation, as now he hath given them in charge to make throughout the world, of grace and salvation prepared for all flesh, for all comers whatsoever. But to imagine and suppose that first he gives the world to know and understand that he intends to save but a very few of them; and yet this notwithstanding, and, as it were, in the very face of such a declaration, to

cause the great year of Jubilee to be proclaimed throughout the world, eternal liberty and redemption to be offered unto all flesh, unto all persons without exception, must needs be most unlike unto him, and unworthy of him, yea, and have a direct tendency to make him that which a reverential sense of his majesty makes hard to be uttered, the hatred and abhorring of all his creatures. David, to present his hollow-hearted and treacherous friends hateful both to God and men, describes them thus; "The words of his mouth were smother than butter, but war was in his mouth: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords," Psa. 55:21. And doth not that opinion turn the glory of the ever gracious God, that great lover of mankind, into the image of such a vile and abominable creature as David here describes, which saith of him, that he comes indeed unto men, and opens the bosom of love unto them, speaks sweet and loving and gracious words unto them, offers them, yea, and that with much importunity of urging and pressing them to an acceptance, terms of mercy and great compassions, forgiveness of sins, adoption, life, salvation, glory, the great things of the world to come, and yet all this while, under all these sweet droppings of his lips, hath in his heart that most bloody and irreconcilable war of reprobation, a purpose and resolution taken up and conceived within him from the days of eternity, never to be altered upon any terms whatsoever, of casting them into hell, and tormenting them with the vengeance of eternal fire ? Certainly that opinion, which representeth God unto men upon such terms, in such a shape as this, flatters or rather befriends the devil, and makes him to have much of God in him. And if God should conceal for the present that intention of his we speak of, viz. of saving only a few, and of destroying the generality of men, and yet proceed in that method which now he doth, in inviting the whole world to grace and favour with him, except he should conceal it to the days of eternity, whensoever it should break forth and be discovered, it would occasion the same reflection of dishonour upon him; yea, and doubtless would comfort and ease the damned in hell, if ever the knowledge of it should come amongst them. But this for the proof of the major proposition in the argument propounded; If Christ died not for all men, then are not all men bound to believe on him for salvation.

The minor, I conceive, needs little proof, being this: But all men are bound to believe on him for salvation. However the truth of this



proposition is as clear as the light at noonday, partly from the commandment of God directed unto all men to believe on him; partly from the threatenings of God denounced against all men that shall refuse to believe on him; partly from the promises made unto all men, who shall believe on him; partly also from the encouragements which are administered by God unto all men to believe on him.

First, It is evident that God commands all men without exception to believe on Christ. "And the times of this ignorance," saith Paul preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles at Athens, "God winked at: but now he commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30. If to repent, then certainly to believe in Christ; without which there is no true repentance. The reader for his further satisfaction on this point (if he be in any degree yet unsatisfied) may at leisure peruse and ponder the following Scriptures: 1 John 3:23; Matt. 16:5; Rom. 10:16, 3; Luke 14:23.

Secondly, As God commandeth all men to believe on Christ, (which is indeed sufficient to prove that they are bound to believe on him,) so doth he severely threaten all those that shall not believe on him. "But he that believeth not, shall be damned," Mark 16:16. The Scriptures likewise abound with passages of this import: a first-fruits whereof are here presented, John 8:24; 3:36; Acts 3:23.

Thirdly, As God commandeth all men to believe on Christ and threateneth all with death, which shall not believe; so he promiseth life and salvation unto all without exception, who shall believe on him. This assertion, I conceive, is no man's question, the Scriptures being so particular and express in the frequent delivery of it, John 3:16; 11:25, 26 ; 1 Pet. 2:6.

Fourthly, and lastly, As God commandeth all men to believe on Christ; threateneth all with death, who shall not believe; promiseth life and salvation, unto all who shall believe; so doth he encourage all to believe on him; my meaning is, he tendereth and suggesteth reasons and motives of an encouraging and sweetly-persuading nature and import unto men to believe. For otherwise the commands and promises of God made unto those who shall believe, are grand encouragements (in a large acception of the word) unto men to believe; and his threatenings are more engaging to the servile tempers and dispositions of men to believe, than any encouragements whatsoever. But my meaning in the particular in hand is this; that besides commands and promises, God lays before the hearts of

men such considerations, which are apt and proper in a sweet and encouraging way to induce men to believe on Christ, or on himself through Christ for salvation. As for example: sometimes he presents them with his great love to them, as John 3:16; Tit. 3:4, &c.; sometimes with his mercy and his compassions, the greatness and tenderness of these, as Exod. 34:6; Luke 1:72, &c.; sometimes with his delight or pleasure taken in showing mercy, as Mic. 7:18; Ezek. 33:11, &c.; sometimes with his faithfulness, as Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 10:13, &c.; sometimes with his oath, for their greater security in his promises, as Heb. 6:17, 18; Luke 1:72, 73; otherwhile, with his desire of their salvation, as 1 Tim. 2:4; Ezek. 33:11; otherwhile again, with the grief and trouble of his soul at their stubborn courses, and that because they are and will be destructive unto them, as Ezek. 18:31 ; Jer. 44:4; sometimes with the abundant provision he hath made for their salvation and peace, as Matt. 22:4; Heb. 9:14; sometimes likewise (to omit many other particulars in this kind) with the consideration of that special glory which will accrue unto himself and to his grace, by their believing and salvation thereupon, Ephes. 1:6, 12, and elsewhere. Now to think or say, that under all these commands, threatenings, promises, and all this great variety of encouragements directed unto all men to believe, yet all men are not bound to believe, is to me the thought and saying only of such a man, who is resolved to stand by his own thoughts and sayings, against any light or evidence of truth whatsoever.

A fourth argument, evincing the death of Christ for all men, is this: If God really and unfeignedly intends or desires the salvation of those who perish, then he really intended the death of Christ for all men. This proposition we shall not need to prove, but only by this brief account. All men (without exception) are either such who are saved, or such who perish; and that God really intended the death of Christ, for those that are saved, is no man's doubt or contest. Therefore if he really intended the salvation of those also who perish in or by the death of Christ, he intended this death of Christ for all. This proposition then being undeniable, I proceed and assume thus: But God really and unfeignedly intends or desires the salvation of those who perish: Therefore he intended the death of Christ for all men. This latter proposition, that God really and unfeignedly desires the salvation of those that perish, is clearly proved by this consideration; viz. that God so frequently, so fervently and

pathetically in the Scriptures professeth his desires of the peace and salvation of such men, yea, and a holy regret of soul in himself, when they will stubbornly run courses destructive to their salvation, contrary to his desires and endeavours with them in this kind. Let us give instance in some passages of such an import as we speak of. “O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever,” Deut. 5:29, (saith the Lord himself concerning the great body of the children of Israel, whose carcasses soon after “fell in the wilderness” through unbelief, as the apostle speaketh.) So again by David, “O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways, I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries,” &c. Psal. 81:13, 14. Thus the Lord speaks concerning those, “whom” as he had immediately before said, “he had given up to their own hearts’ lusts, and who walked in their own counsels.” That expression also of the Lord in Isaiah is of the same character. “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thou shouldest go; O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea,” Isa. 48:17. Whereunto this also in the same prophet may be joined; “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts, a people that provoketh me to anger to my face, that sacrificeth in gardens,” &c. Isa. 65:2. By “spreading forth the hands,” saith Calvin, Englished upon the place, “he signifies a daily summoning of them, and that *to draw and unite them unto himself*.” A little after; “The Lord never speaks unto us, but he therewithal stretcheth forth his hand to unite us unto himself, and causeth us to feel that he is near unto us. Yea, he so manifests his fatherly love, and so willingly accepts of us, that if we yield not obedience unto his voice, we ought justly to impute the same to our own frowardness.” So that Calvin’s judgment clearly is, that in this and such like places, God professeth a reality of intention and desire in him “to draw and unite unto himself” (*i. e.* to sanctify and save) such who, through their own frowardness, never come to be actually united unto him, or saved.

Add hereunto only two places more for the present, though there be many others to be found. The former of these shall be that in Jer. 44:4, 5:

“Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn incense unto other gods.” The latter place is in the New Testament. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,” Matt, 23:37, 38. Upon the former of these places, Calvin makes the prophet to say, “that God was watchful, because *he was solicitous for the people's safety*. Even as a man that is intent upon his business, will not stay till the sun shines upon him, but will prevent the morning itself.” Upon the latter place he saith, that “God attempted, in a way of gentleness and fair speaking, *to allure* the Jews unto him; that his *benignity*, or kindness, was great towards them; that his invitations of them were more than mother-like; with much more of like import. Now to say that God should profess and express himself unto men and women with so much vehemency and patheticalness of affection, as these gestures, phrases, and expressions (our chiefest adversaries themselves being judges) imply, spreading forth his hands all the day long, endeavouring to gather people with as much care and tenderness as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, crying out, Oh, do not this abominable thing, &c., and yet have no desire at all, no intention at all of their salvation, nay, on the contrary, have settled and grounded intentions to destroy them for ever, is to render him like to that generation of men in the world, whom his soul most abhorreth, and who are indeed, and that most justly, the hatred and abhorring both of God and men, hypocrites, I mean, and dissemblers. Christ commands us to be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful, Luke 6:36; but if we should be merciful, as those represent the mercifulness of our heavenly Father, who deny that Christ died for all men, we should be the first-born children of hypocrisy, and the most notorious dissemblers under heaven, many degrees worse than those whom James speaks of with reproof; who say “to a brother or sister, naked and destitute of daily food, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful for the body,” James 2:15, 16. For though such merciful ones as these do their poor brethren and sisters little good with

their merciful words, yet it no ways appears, nor is it likely that, under such words as these, they hide or harbour intentions of evil, or of a further increase of misery unto them; whereas they that shall be merciful like unto their heavenly Father, as the opinion which we oppose lays the pattern before us, shall under the most affectionate protestations of love and kindness unto men, under the most earnest asseverations of intentions and desires of their good, conceal settled projects, purposes, desires, and intentions of doing them the greatest mischief they can imagine.

That which is wont to be excepted against this argument is so empty, except it be of contumely and dishonour unto God, that it neither deserves consideration nor confutation; and I believe all that can be excepted against it is of very little more weight. Some, as to the Scriptures cited for the confirmation of the argument with their fellows, wherein God (as we heard) professeth with so much earnestness the sincerity of his desires to the welfare and salvation of those who perish, answer somewhat to this purpose,—for it is hard indeed to make any regular or good sense of what they answer at this point,—that God in such expressions useth *sancta quaedam simulatione*, a kind of holy simulation: others, that he doth *duplicem personam induere*, *i. e.* that he takes upon him a double person: others, that God is presented in such Scriptures as speaking *secundum voluntatem approbativam, non efficacem*, *i. e.* according to his will of approbation, not according to his will of efficacy or execution: others, that such wishes or desires as are expressed in the said Scriptures are attributed unto God anthropopathetically, and according to the rate of human Capacity, &c. But what uncouth and hard-faced allegations are these? or what salt of interpretation is there that will make them savoury? or what do they that use them but as it were beg bread out of desolate places to support the life of an opinion that is guilty, and deserves to die?

First, I would know of those who take sanctuary from the pursuit of the Scriptures mentioned, under the wing of *sancta quaedam simulatio in Deo*, a kind of holy simulation in God, what they mean by this *sancta simulatio*? As far as my short understandings is able to reach, to talk of a holy simulation, and of a sunshine night, or of a beast endued with the reasonable soul of a man, would make discourses of a parallel consistence. If simulation, counterfeiting, or professing one thing, whilst

the contrary is intended, be holy in God, why or how should they not be holy in men also? But in men we know they are abominable. Yet the tenor of God's injunction unto men is, "*As he that calleth you is holy, so be ye holy* in all manner of conversation," 1 Pet. 1:15. Or if some things in God may be holy, which are abominable in men, how or by what rule shall men distinguish between such holy things in God, which are holy also when found in men, and such other holy things in God, which, when found in men, are abominable? Besides, the Holy Ghost attributes the honourable title of *dipevritjc*, one incapable of lying, unto God, Titus 1:2. If God cannot lie, much less can he counterfeit or dissemble; simulation and dissimulation always including lying, and adding somewhat besides that is evil to boot. And doubtless he that so much loveth or "desireth truth," i. e. conformity in reality of purpose and affection, unto words and outward professions "in the inward parts" of men, Psal. 51:6, and commands them to "love, not in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth," 1 John 3:18, is himself fully commensurable in heart and soul, in the most real purposes and intentions that can be conceived, with all that goeth out of his lips. His mouth is not so wide opened unto the world, but that his heart is enlarged accordingly; nor is he at any hand to be judged like unto him whom David brandeth with this character of wickedness, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords," Psal. 45:21. Such a simulation or dissembling as we now speak of, and which some most unworthily attribute unto God, is by the very light of nature execrable and accursed. Homer puts these words into the mouth of his Achilles:

**To me he is abhorred like death,  
Whose heart accords not with his breath.**

But this subterfuge of *simulatio sancta* is, it seems, so broadly obnoxious, that the greatest part of those who wish themselves safe from the prementioned Scriptures, are afraid or ashamed to trust to it. Therefore,

2. Some others of them attempt an escape by the new, but dead way of this distinction. God, say they, wisheth the peace and salvation of those that perish, voluntate approbativa, with or according to his approving

will, *i. e.* He approveth of the salvation of such persons as good; but he doth not wish it voluniate efficaci, *i. e.* with his efficacious will. Are not men, think we, sorely afraid of the truth, who can accept of deliverance from it by the unworthy hand of such distinctions as these? For, 1. Is it a thing of any reasonable resentment in the least, that God should positively and peremptorily determine and decree from eternity that which is directly contrary to his will of approbation? Or, is not the destruction of those who perish contrary to their salvation? Therefore, if God approveth of their salvation, and yet peremptorily decreeth their condemnation, (whether positively or permissively only, as these men count permission, is not material, as we formerly observed,) doth he not decree that from eternity which his soul hateth or abhorreth, or, which is the same, which is contrary to his will of approbation? And who ever decreed such a thing which is contrary to what he approveth, taketh pleasure, or delighteth in? No man ever yet, being in possession of his senses, though but common and ordinary, decreed his own sorrow, or any thing contrary to what he approveth. In what sense Christ is said to have been “delivered up, taken, and crucified,” with wicked hands, “by the determined counsel of God,” hath been formerly opened; by the tenor of which explication it plainly appeareth, that in or about the crucifying of Christ there was nothing decreed or detennined by God, but with perfect accord to his will of approbation. 2. When the said distinction teacheth us that God doth not will the salvation of those that perish voluniate efficaci, with his efficacious or effectual will, I would gladly know what it meaneth by this efficacious will of God. Certainly he willet the salvation of these men with a will efficacious to a degree, yea, to a very considerable and great degree; with a will, I mean, exerting itself upon such terms in order to the promoting, furthering, and procuring their salvation, that, unless they resisted the Holy Ghost, they should be actually saved; yea, upon such terms, that God himself professeth that he knoweth not what to do more to effect or procure their salvation than what he doth: “What could have been done more,” saith he, “to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” Isa. 5:4; to interpret, “what could have been done more,” by, “what would have been more,” is to dissense the place, and to make hay and stubble of good silver and gold. In what sense God is, and properly enough may be, said not to be able to “do more” than what he actually doth. to promote the salvation even of those who perish, hath been

formerly opened. Yea, the most learned abettors of that doctrine which we now oppose, generally grant that God vouchsafeth means of salvation, yea, sometimes means very rich and powerful in this kind, unto those who in the event are not saved. Doubtless, such dispensations as these argue a will in God some ways, and in some measure, operative and efficacious in order to the salvation of such men, which is more than a will of mere approbation. If by the efficacious will of God, the said distinction meaneth such a will which acteth irresistibly, or necessitatingly, in order to the saving of men, and that God with such a will as this doth not will the salvation of any of those who perish; my answer is, I. That if this be meant particularly of the initial or first applications made by God unto such men, that will of his from which these proceed may, in a sense, be said to act irresistibly and necessitatingly towards their salvation; not indeed as if by these exertions or actings of this will of his the salvation of these men must necessarily follow, but because such applications of God unto them in order to their salvation cannot be prevented, nor God hindered, by any means whatsoever, from or in the making of them unto them. God will, will or nill men themselves, or who ever besides, at first, before they have corrupted themselves with the ways and manners of the world, graciously apply himself unto them in the things of their eternal peace, by writing the effect of his law in their hearts, by enlightening them with the knowledge of himself, to a good degree, as of his being, "his eternal power, and godhead," &c., which we may call the elements or first rudiments of salvation. But, 2. If by the efficacious will of God, the distinction meaneth such a will in him which acteth upon such terms, in order to the salvation of a man, that there is no possibility for him to miscarry or perish under these actings, I grant that God doth not will the salvation of those that perish with such a will as this, but deny, withal, that there is any such will as this in him, or that he willeth the salvation of any man or men whatsoever upon any such terms, but that all the time of their sojourning in the flesh, and till salvation be actually vested in them, they are, such actings notwithstanding, in a possibility of perishing, or of not being saved; although this possibility is no ground, nor reasonable occasion, unto those who believe, of any fear that hath torment, but only of care that hath conscience, as hath been shown formerly. But, 3. Concerning those who inform us that the Scriptures specified, wherein



God presenteth himself, as affectionately wishing and desiring the salvation even of those who perish, are figurative, and to be understood anthropopathetically, conceiving that by saying thus, they shake off the argument built upon these Scriptures against them, the truth is that their information in this kind is steady and good, but their conceit upon it weak and worthless. For what though a Scripture passage be figurative, and contains in it an anthropopathy, one or more, is it therefore non-significative ? or doth it hold forth nothing of a spiritual import to the judgments and understandings of men for their edification? When God saith of himself, “If any man draw back, *my soul* shall have no pleasure in him,” Heb. 10:38; so again when he saith, “All those things hath *mine hand* made,” Isa. 66:2; so when he is said to have given unto “Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with *the finger* of God,” Exod. 31:18, with others more of like character, without number, are such sayings as these barbarians unto us, or like so many trumpets giving an uncertain sound ? or are they not as significant and expressive, as full of edification and instruction in the knowledge of God, as other sayings in the same volume with them ? Or could the same subject or matter of truth, which they hold forth, have been delivered with more grace, or with better advantage to the understandings of men, in other terms or forms of expression than those specified ? Yea, the truth is that very little, if any thing at all, concerning God, can be conveyed by words unto the minds and understandings of men, but by expressions which are figurative, the reason whereof hath, I remember, been formerly observed by us. And for the Scriptures, questionless there is in them more of the knowledge of God, and of his attributes, taught by anthropopathies, and that kind of dialect, which borroweth things proper unto men to make known unto us things proper unto God, than by all other kinds of phrases or expressions whatsoever. Now then this I would demand of those who of the anthropopathies found in the Scriptures under present consideration, think to make shields and bucklers against the dint and force of the argument drawn from them, I would, I say, willingly demand of these men, what other sense, or what other matter of information, instruction, edification, they can make of the said places, but only this, or that which is equivalent to it, viz. that there is that eminently or transcendency in God, or in the Divine Being, which relateth unto the salvation of those, who notwithstanding in fine perish, after the same manner, wherein the

earnest wishes, and most serious and cordial desires in men, relate unto their respective objects, or things so wished and desired by them.

4. and lastly, They, who to salve their opinion of Christ's non-dying for those whose salvation God professeth with so much seriousness and solemnity in the passages in hand that he desireth, without charging him with hypocrisy, apply this plaster, viz. that in this place God expresseth himself, *pro captu humano*, *i. e.* with a condescension to human capacity, these men, I say, spin the same thread of vanity with the former. For be it granted, that God in the said passages condescends to the infirm and weak apprehensions of men, and teacheth them mysteries, as they are able to hear and understand, doth it follow from hence, that therefore he teacheth them nothing at all, speaks nothing at all to their understandings in these places? If it be granted that in them he speaks any thing at all to the understandings of men, I demand, as lately, what can it else be, but that he truly, really, cordially, affectionately, wisheth, willeth, desireth, (in such a sense as he truly, really, cordially, affectionately, wisheth, willeth, desireth any other thing,) the salvation of such men, who yet through their own voluntary negligence and unworthiness, in conclusion perish, and are not saved? And if so, then doth that doctrine either arraign the most holy and blessed God of the foulest hypocrisy and dissimulation that lightly can be imagined, which affirmeth that notwithstanding the solemnity and frequency of such protestations, yet he never intended that his Son Christ should die, and make atonement for them; or else that he intends and desires their salvation otherwise than by Christ's death.

A fifth demonstration of the doctrine asserted. "That doctrine which directly tends to separate and divide between the creature and his Creator blessed for ever, or to create and raise jealousies and hard thoughts in the former against the latter, cannot be evangelical or truth : But such is the doctrine which denieth that Christ died for all men without exception: Ergo." The major proposition in this argument carrieth a sufficiency of light in it for the manifestation of its own truth. The clear and known project and intent of the gospel is "to reconcile all things both in heaven and on earth into one," as we lately heard from the apostle; to slay and destroy that enmity which is so apt to arise and work in the minds and thoughts of men against God, through a consciousness of their sinful lives and ways, in conjunction with those strong impressions upon their

conscience of his infinite holiness and majesty; and so to create and plant in their stead worthy and honourable thoughts of God, full of love, sweetness, and peace, in the inward parts of men, as we argued and proved at large from 2 Cor. 5:19. Therefore that doctrine, the face whereof is set a quite contrary way, as viz. to multiply, foment and increase those evil and hard thoughts of God, which the sense of sin, and guilt, as hath been said, are marvellously apt to engender in the hearts and spirits of men, must needs be anti-evangelical, and of another inspiration much differing from that whereby the gospel was given unto the world. So that to clothe this proposition with light, we shall not need to labour or spin.

Nor need we be put to much trouble for proof of the latter proposition, had not the adverse doctrine gotten the advantage of possession against the clear truth, in the judgments of men. For what can be more apparent, than that such a doctrine, which manifestly importeth the causeless, peremptory, irremediable, and unremoveable hatred of God against far the greatest part of men, and this burning to the bottom of hell: the persons against whom this hatred is supposed to be lodged in him, being unknown; What, I say, can be more apparent than that such a doctrine as this, directly, and with open face tends to a most sad, horrid, and desperate alienation of the heart and soul of the poor creature, man, from his dear and ever blessed Creator, God ? Or is it possible that such a creature should truly, cordially, or entirely love, or delight in him that made him, in case he either knows, or otherwise hath strong grounds of jealousy and fear, that before he made him, and without any offence taken at, or respect had unto, any of his future sins, or unworthy carriages in the least, he so far hated and abominated him, as to resolve, against all mediation whatsoever, to cast him out of his sight, to devote and doom him to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire? Or doth not that doctrine, which denieth that God intended the death of Christ for the salvation of all men, manifestly import and suppose that God to such a degree hated and abhorred, or however purposed and decreed to hate and abhor, the far greatest part of men from eternity, as to resolve against all means possible to be used by them, or purposed to be used by himself, for prevention, to pour out the fierceness of his wrath upon their heads in flames of unquenchable fire? The Holy Ghost teacheth us, that the love of God, *i. e.* love towards God, must or ought to be kindled in the hearts of men, by a sense or apprehension of a precedency of this affection in him

towards them. "We love him," saith John, "because he first loved us or, as the original *ἀγαπᾷν*, will indifferently bear, as Calvin himself observes and grants, "Let us love him, because he loved us first." 1 John 4:19. According to either of these constructions of the words, the intimation is pregnant, that the love of God towards men apprehended and believed, is and ought to be the proper seed of a reciprocal affection in men towards him. And the Scripture most frequently conjures men to love God, upon the account of his great love towards them manifested by the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, unto them. Now if love declared and resented be the natural and proper seed of the same affection in another, then hatred discovered and apprehended, must needs be a seed of a contrary import, and of like aptness to beget in its own likeness also. For though God chargeth men to love their enemies, and those that hate them, yet he doth it upon the account of that great and signal love which he hath first shown unto them in the gift of his only begotten and dear Son. And we see, notwithstanding this great commandment imposed by God upon men, and that upon the advantage of such a rational and equitable ground or motive for the performance of it, yet with what difficulty and renitency of the flesh, even in men truly sanctified, yea, and with what rareness of example, it is effectually, if at all, performed. How impossible then must it needs be, that men should truly love God, whilst they apprehend him as an enemy, bent in an implacable and unappeasable manner, to destroy them, and that with the most formidable destruction, they are capable of enduring, and this to the days of eternity ? Especially considering, that they have no advantage or motive, of any love shown unto them by another, any ways considerable, whereby to be strengthened or enabled to love him, against so sore a stumbling-block and obstruction in the way of this affection, as a reprobating of them from eternity. This demonstration is so pregnant of proof and conviction, that certain I am nothing can with any strength, scarce with any face of reason, be alleged against it. But meet it is that the poor should be heard in his cause, as well as the rich. Therefore,

1. To the argument now urged, it may be objected, that the doctrine which affirmeth that Christ died only for the elect, and not for all men in general, hath no such tendency or aptness in it as the said argument chargeth upon it, to separate between God and any of his creatures; because it leaveth a hope to every person of mankind, distributively

considered, that they may be of the number of the elect, and consequently of those for whom Christ died. There is no man or woman hut may, the said doctrine notwithstanding, be of a good and comfortable hope that Christ died fox them, and so have no ground to conceive hardly of God, or to be alienated in their minds or hearts from him. To this I answer,

Be it granted that the doctrine we blame leaveth a degree of hope to every person that he is one of those for whom Christ died, yet it is a hope very faint and feeble, and which must needs be sick at the heart, as being overbalanced many degrees by contrary jealousies and fears; and so can at no hand be termed a good or comfortable hope, or give any advantage by way of motive unto the creature to think well and honourably of God. The truth is, it is rather a possibility of conceit than any well- grounded hope that such a doctrine leaveth or affordeth unto any man, being yet in his unregenerate estate, that he is one of those for whom Christ died. Suppose forty or a hundred men should be arraigned and found guilty of high treason against their prince, and he should declare, without naming any of their persons, that he would graciously pardon the offence of one or two of them, but was resolved, against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, to inflict in the most severe manner the penalty of death upon all the rest; would such a hope of escape or of finding favour in the eyes of their prince as should be afforded or left unto these men in this case, be any considerable encouragement or ground of motive unto them respectively to conceive honourably of their prince for clemency, goodness, and mercy ? or would not the severity and peremptoriness of his resolutions to take away the lives of the generality or far greatest part of them, rather represent him to their minds as a man of rigour and extremity against those that provoke him ? Much more should these men and all others have just ground to judge this prince to be a person of a hard spirit, addicted unto cruelties and blood, in case they should know, especially from himself and by his own profession, that long before any of the said persons were touched with the least guilt, yea, or thought of treason, he was peremptorily resolved to have the blood and lives of them all, one or two only excepted? And as for his granting pardon unto this one or two, there being no ground in reason or equity why he should respect these more than the other, may it not seem rather the working of a mere humour, or a conceited and groundless action, than any fruit of an habitual goodness or clemency of disposition, or of any mature or

considerate deliberation? And doth not the doctrine which we condemn for that capital crime of denying that Christ died for all men, draw a portraiture of God resembling in all the lineaments of his face the hard-favouredness of such a prince ? First, It represents him as engaged, and this against all possibility of relenting, yea, and this to the days of eternity, in counsels and purposes of blood, yea, of the blood of the precious souls of men. Secondly, It representeth him as thus engaged against millions of millions of these souls, yea, against the whole mass or element of mankind, a small remnant comparatively only excepted, and these for a long time, if not during the whole term of their mortality, undiscernible from the rest; within the compass of which term, notwithstanding, they must be prevailed with to love God, or else they are lost for eternity. Thirdly, The said doctrine portraitureth him engaged as aforesaid, before, and without any consideration or respect had to, any the future sins, impenitency, unbelief, or any other, of those against whom it supposeth him so implacably and unmercifully engaged. Fourthly and lastly, It holdeth him forth unto the world as purposing and intending, without any reasonable or equitable cause, only upon his peremptory and mere will, to make that vast difference between that small remnant of men mentioned and the numberless multitudes of them besides, which consists in the unmeasurable blessedness of the former, and the inconceivable misery and torment of the latter. Now, whether this be to form the most blessed God in the minds, judgments, souls, and consciences of men as amiable and lovely, as attractive of their hearts and affections, as worthy to be delighted in, to be depended on, by all persons of mankind, without exception of any, for all and all manner of good, temporal, spiritual, eternal, I am not much afraid to make it the arbitrement of those that dare so much as pretend to ingenuousness, fairness, and freedom of spirit amongst our adversaries themselves.

If it be here objected and said, that our doctrine also representeth God as irreversibly engaged, and this from eternity, upon the same destruction or punishment, and this of the same numbers of men with the other, inasmuch as it granteth or supposeth that God from eternity unchangeably purposed the eternal destruction of all those, without exception, that shall remain finally impenitent and unbelieving, which are the same men, both for numbers and personality, which the other doctrine, so much opposed by us, presenteth as the objects of those

unalterable reprobating purposes or intendments of his from eternity; and consequently, that the one doctrine represented God as little lovely or desirable unto his creature as the other; To this I answer,

1. Though the doctrine asserted by us supposed such a decree in God. from eternity whereby all persons that should remain finally impenitent and unbelieving are decreed or adjudged unto the vengeance of eternal fire, yet doth it not adjudge to this account any such who are either through defect of years, as children dying infants, or defectiveness in discretion otherwise are not capable of faith or repentance, of which we have already in part given an account, Chap, 6., pages 171, &c., and shall, God willing, account more fully in the latter part of this discourse: whereas the doctrine impugned by us included as well infants of days as defectives of years, especially the former, in that decree of reprobation which it notioneth in God. So that this doctrine doth at no hand engage God so deep in the blood of mankind as the other; and consequently, in this respect, rendereth him unto his creature far more gracious, lovely, and desirable than the other.

2. The doctrine we plead, though it sets the face of God's reprobating decree against all finally impenitent and unbelieving, and so materially, and in a consequential way, against the same persons capable of impenitency, which the other doctrine subjected unto it; yet, 1. It subjected no person of mankind, as such, or byname, unto it, but supposed all men, as men, in a capacity, and under a fair possibility, of being elected, this decree of reprobation notwithstanding; though it concluded from many propheticall Scriptures otherwise, that a very great number of men will in time be reprobated for their wickedness and unbelief; whereas, the doctrine opposed bends this decree against the persons of men personally considered, and so leaveth such and such men, from first to last, irrecoverably doomed to destruction. 2. The doctrine asserted by us presenteth God in his decree of reprobation as truly and really intending the salvation of men as in his decree of election itself; yea, and questioned not but that his decree of reprobation, according to his gracious purpose and intendment therein, hath occasioned, and doth occasion daily, the salvation of many. The principal intent of the law, threatening such and such malefactors, as traitors, murderers, &c. with death, is not to take away the lives of such persons, who shall commit these foul crimes and misdemeanours, by death, this is but the

subordinate intention or end of it, but to prevent the perpetration of these crimes in all that live under this law, and consequently, their suffering of death for them. Much less is it any part of the intent of such a law to make any person or persons, by name, traitors, murderers, or the like, that so they may be cut off by death. In like manner, we judge and teach, that the sovereign and primary intent of this decree of God, “he,” *i. e.* whosoever “believeth not, shall be damned,” Mark 16:16,— besides which, in respect of the substance and import of it, which may be expressed in other terms, we find no decree of reprobation in God mentioned, no, nor yet so much as intimated in the Scriptures, is not to bring damnation upon those who shall not believe, much less to expose any man, or numbers of men, to an unavoidable necessity of a non-believing, that so they may be damned, but to prevent the sin of unbelief in all men, in order to their nondamnation, and that they may be saved. 3, and lastly. The doctrine which avoucheth that Christ died for all men clearly resolveth the reprobation of all that are, or ever come to be reprobated, into themselves, or their own voluntary and deliberate course of sinning, or persisting in unbelief, as the cause thereof; and so, fairly dischargeth God and his decree as no ways accessary unto, it; whereas, the adverse opinion resolveth it into the mere pleasure or peremptory will of God in his decree of reprobation, affirming this to be the principal, if not the sole and adequate cause of it. So that there is a very vast difference between the one opinion and the other in their respective representations of God unto his creature, in point of grace, goodness, and loveliness on the one hand, as of rigour, hardness, and unloveliness on the other hand. It is true, God is very severe, terrible, and unrelenting, in the execution of his penal decrees upon those who voluntarily expose themselves to the doom and dint of them ; in which respect the Scripture speaketh oft of his severity; but, in the framing of them, his primary intentions were, as hath been said, gracious, no ways inconsistent with, or repugnant to, the peace and comfort of any of his creatures, but calculated with dueness of proportion and respects for the advancement of them. Yet,

2. Against the main argument last insisted upon, it may be further objected; They who deny that Christ died for any but for the elect only, represent God altogether as gracious and lovely unto his creature as they who affirm that he died for all. Because the former hold and teach withal,



that God really intends that all those for whom Christ died shall be actually saved hereby; whereas the latter hold, that though Christ died for all, yet he died only so, or upon such terms for them that, notwithstanding his dying for them, they may all perish. Now, doth it not argue as much, or more, grace and goodness in God, to provide certainly, and above all possibility of miscarrying, for the salvation of a few, than to provide a bare possibility only of salvation for all; or for the salvation of all after such a manner, and upon such terms only, that all, notwithstanding this provision made for them, may very possibly perish? To this, also, I answer,

1. That they who teach that Christ died for all men, do not teach that he died to make provision only for a bare possibility that all may be saved, but such a provision which is fully and richly sufficient for the salvation of all men; yea, so sufficient, that all men, if they be not intolerably and unexcusably negligent and careless in a matter of so transcendent a concernment unto them, may, and most certainly shall, be saved. The provision which God hath made, by the death of Christ, for the salvation of all, is so redundantly plentiful that there is no place or possibility left for the miscarrying of any man, but by a neglect of it only. "How shall we escape," saith the apostle, "if we *neglect* so great a salvation," &c. Heb. 2:3, clearly implying, that if they did not neglect it, but seriously and diligently mind and look after it, they should escape, (viz., the wrath of God and the vengeance of hell fire,) and, consequently, be saved. Otherwise, in case their regarding or esteeming of this salvation should be accompanied with the same danger or destruction which their neglect should bring upon them, the apostle might as well, or, indeed, rather, have said, "How shall we escape," whether we "neglect this great salvation," or no?

2. There is no comparison, for matter of grace, goodness, or bounty, between such a provision for the salvation of all men, without exception, whereby all and every person may, if they be not wilfully bent upon their own destruction, be saved; and such, whereby there is no possibility, save only for a few, a number inconsiderable compared with the whole, to be saved. Nor is that certainty or necessity of the salvation of a few, which is pretended to be consulted or intended in this latter provision, being accompanied with the exposure of so many millions of millions of precious souls to inevitable damnation, any ways considerable, in point of

grace, with that great and blessed opportunity which, by the former provision, is put into the hand of the world, and of every person of mankind, without exception, to escape the vengeance which is to come, if they please, and withal to be crowned with an incorruptible crown of glory; especially, if it be considered withal, that he that makes such a provision for a few, had wherewithal in abundance, and this disposable, contrivable to no other use or purpose, to have provided upon the same terms for all; and that all the reason he had for his non-disposing of it this way,—I mean, for the benefit and blessing of all,—was only his mere will and pleasure. Suppose a man had a thousand quarters of wheat, or the like, which he knows not what to do with, or to what use to convert it, but only to the relief of a company of poor indigent creatures ready to be affamished and perish through hunger: in case this man should actually relieve only two or three persons in this distress with part of this abundance, there being a thousand before him in the same extremity, and in no possibility of being relieved from any other hand, but should rather choose to cast the residue of his grain into the sea, or bury it underground, or some ways or other destroy the serviceableness of it unto man, than dispose of it towards the relief of any of the rest, would not such an act as this, by reason of the unnaturalness and affectate unmercifulness of it, quite drown the grace and loveliness of his charity in relieving those few ? In like manner, they who pretend the exaltation of the grace and love of God towards men, in giving Christ to die for them, whose death they grant to be sufficient, in point of merit, to save all men without exception, and yet teach that God intended only the salvation of a few, the whole lump or body of mankind standing in the same need of salvation with these few, and. that he chose to suffer the merit of this death of Christ rather to vanish into the air, or to be like water spilt upon the ground, (excepting only the salvation of those few by it,) than to accommodate and relieve thereby the residue of mankind in their saddest and utmost extremity; what do they less than bury all that which is lovely in that act of grace or mercy towards a few, under the imputation of so great an unmercifulness or hardness of bowels towards many ?

At this turn it is commonly pleaded that God is no debtor to any of his creatures, and consequently that he is and was at perfect liberty, whether he would show mercy unto any, or make provision for the salvation of the smallest number of all. Upon which account, it could not have been

termed an act of unmercifulness in him, in case no provision had been made by him for the salvation of any, much less that he should not make provision for all. As it argues no unmercifulness at all in him, that he hath made no provision at all for the salvation of the devils, because he was no ways bound to it. Whereas upon men, in case they have means and opportunity to relieve the necessities of those that are in misery, and neglect to do it, the imputation and charge of unmercifulness justly lieth, because they are under a law in this behalf. So that the grace of God, in his merciful provision for the salvation of a few, is no ways obscured or disparaged by his nonproviding for all. To all this I answer,

1. That neither the argument yet in hand, nor the answer given to the former objection, intermeddles little or much with the liberty or rightfulness of power vested in God to deny mercy where he pleaseth, as to show it likewise where and to whom he pleaseth : but the one and the other insist upon the demonstration of this, viz. that they who ascribe unto God reality of intentions to make provision for the salvation of all men without exception, in and by the death of Christ, upon these gracious terms for the enjoyment of it, which have been specified, render him far more gracious, lovely, and attractive to the hearts of men, than they who present him with intentions of providing only for a few thereby, upon what terms soever, with the hardening of himself against and neglect of all the rest, being incomparably far the greater number, in their greatest extremity. And this, I suppose, we have made good against all rational contradiction. But,

2. Whereas we reflected upon such an act, which our adversaries imagine to be in God, whereby they say, notwithstanding a sufficiency of merit before him, in the death of Christ, for the salvation of all as well as of a few, yet he rather suffered this precious sufficiency, in respect of the redundancy of it over and above the provision made by it for a few, to vanish or be split, than to intend any help or healing by it unto the generality of men; whereas, I say, we censured such an act as this, as ill consisting with or obscuring the beauty and loveliness of that gracious act of God in providing for the salvation of a few, we did not herein reflect prejudice in the least upon any liberty or rightfulness of power truly competent unto or vested in God, but only showed and asserted the deformity or moral contradictiousness between two acts, which notwithstanding our adversaries ascribe, as well the one as the other,

unto God.

3. Concerning that liberty of showing and denying mercy where and to whom he pleaseth, which the objection in hand asserteth unto God, we answer, that how absolute soever this liberty in him may be conceived to be, simply or in respect of any engagement from men or any creature, yet,

1. It is confined and subjected, unto such declarations and promises which himself hath freely made; so that, for example, he is no more at liberty, nor hath he any more right of power to withhold or deny mercy from and unto any of those to whom he hath promised mercy, or to whom he hath declared that he will show mercy, however otherwise they may seem unworthy or unmeet objects of mercy; he hath no more liberty, I say, to do either of these, than he hath to lie deal unfaithfully, unjustly, and the like. Upon this account the prophet David acknowledged it unto God, as a signal engagement upon him, to praise and worship him, that he “had” still magnified his word above all his name,” Psal. 138:2; meaning, that whatever attribute of his, (which is, either in whole or in part, his name,) at any time seemed to oppose or stand up against the performance of any promise or declaration of mercy made by him, yet he always magnified his promise, by giving real, full, and seasonable performance thereunto: he passeth not for the vailing or obscuring any other part of his name, so that his truth and faithfulness in his word may be advanced.
2. As he hath no liberty, as some men count liberty, of showing or denying mercy, contrary to his word, so neither hath he any liberty of acting in. one kind or other, and consequently neither of showing or denying mercy, in opposition to his wisdom, which is, as it were, the steerage of all his dispensations in one kind or other, according to that of the apostle formerly considered, “ who worketh all things *according to the counsel* of his will,” Eph. 1:11; *i. e.* according to the exigency or requirement of that most absolute, infinite wisdom of his, by which his will, and consequently his power, which is always exerted and moved into action by and according to his will, is directed and led forth in all the movings and actings of it. Insomuch that, as we lately argued and proved, God is at far less liberty to decline, in any his ways and actions, the most district rules and principles of the most accurate wisdom that is, than any creature whatsoever, man, or angel. Therefore to conceit or plead for such a liberty in God of showing and denying mercy to whom he pleaseth, which is inconsistent with that determination of himself in

either kind, which he hath declared in his word, is to conceive and speak unworthily of him, yea, and to shake the foundations of that hope upon which the saints and sound believers are built by the gospel. For if God be at liberty to deny mercy, contrary to his word, or will revealed therein, what assurance can the best believers have that they either are or shall be justified or saved by him? So that until our adversaries have first proved that God hath made no such declaration in the gospel as that he hath made, and is still willing to make, provision for the salvation of all men without exception, by the death of Christ, which hitherto they have not done, it is in vain for them to pretend a liberty in him of denying mercy to whom he pleaseth, by way of proof or confirmation of their opinion.

4. Though it would have been no act of unmercifulness in God, but of districtness of justice only, in case no provision had been made by him, either by the death of Christ or otherwise, for the salvation of any, yet such an act as this would not have rendered him so gracious and lovely in the eyes of his creature, or so attractive of their hearts and souls, and consequently not so evangelical, as that act of grace hath now done and doth, whereby he hath made that blessed provision for them. And if a providing for the salvation of some, doth (in the judgment of our adversaries) render him more gracious and evangelical, than such an act or course would have done, whereby he had refused to make this provision for any at all; certainly the greater the number shall be supposed, for whom this gracious provision is made by him, so much the greater and more evangelical must that act of grace necessarily be, by which such provision is made. And in case God had provided (whether by the death of Christ, or in any other way) but for the salvation of one man only, and had left the whole posterity of Adam, this one man excepted, to have perished everlastingly, it could be looked upon but only as such an act of grace, which is next to none at all, and wherein little of that evangelical spirit, which abounds and reigns in God, could have been discovered, yea, and would doubtless commend itself unto the intelligent creature, less for wisdom than for grace. Proportionably, the fewer or smaller number they are supposed to be, for whom provision of salvation is now made by God, the lesser and more contracted, and so the less, evangelical, must that grace needs be concluded to be, by which this provision is supposed to be made. For what proportion one, or a single person, beareth unto those few, whose salvation is (in the sense of our

adversaries) now provided for by God; the same do these few bear unto all, or unto the whole body of mankind. Therefore if they judge that God showeth more grace in providing for the salvation of that number of men, which they call the elect, than he should have done in providing for one person of this number only; they have reason to judge also, in case God maketh this provision, not only for their small number of elect, but for them and all others with them, that he showeth far more grace in such a provision as this, than in that which their doctrine confineth him unto.

Nor doth it from these debates any ways follow, that in case God had made provision for the salvation of the devils, he should have manifested more grace or evangelicalness of spirit, than now, according to our principles, he hath done, in providing salvation for men only, though for all men, although, it is true, the number of those for whom provision of salvation should have been made in this case had been greater, than now we suppose it to be. The reason is, because grace, especially divine grace, is not to be measured or judged of simply or merely by any beneficialness accruing unto the creature of one kind or other, but by a beneficialness accruing in an honourable and prudential way, in respect of him from whom, or by whom, this beneficialness is supposed to accrue. Acts of prodigality are, or may be beneficial to the receivers of what is thereby given, yet are they no acts of grace: nor would it be any act of grace in a judge to spare the life of a murderer, or traitor, though this act of his, in the nature of it, is beneficial to him whose life is spared, and may possibly turn to a further benefit unto him. The reason why these, and such like acts as these, though they may be very beneficial to their objects respectively, are notwithstanding not to be reputed acts of grace, because grace imports such a principle which is every ways regular and savoury; and as comely and honourable in the fruits and actings of it unto him in whom it resides, as beneficial, helpful, or refreshing unto others: whereas prodigality, and so injustice, or inconsiderateness in a judge, though beneficial unto many, are yet unworthy principles, and justly dishonourable unto their subjects. So then, in case it were not, or be not well consisting with the principles of true and divine wisdom, and so would not have been truly honourable unto God to make provision for the salvation of the devils, the making of this provision for them would not have been any matter of grace in him: and consequently, upon such a supposition, he should have been never the more gracious, though in

making provision for salvation, he should have taken the devils into part and fellowship with men. And that it is no ways consistent with his wisdom or honour, to spread a table of salvation before the devils, as he hath done for men, may by this clear argument a posteriori be evinced, viz. that he hath not done it: it being reasonable in the highest to conceive, that God never was, never will be wanting to himself in point of honour or glory. Besides, that of the apostle, *Ov yap ifae ay&ov imkaiifidvcac*, Heb. 2:16, *i. e.* for in no wise, or at no hand, doth he help, or relieve the angels, (meaning, the lapsed angels,) carrieth this import pregnantly and distinctly in it, that to reach forth a helping hand unto them, was not simply a thing which God was not pleased or willing to do, but such a thing which lay at a great distance from his thoughts or intentions to do. Which distance imports a signal inconsistency with or repugnancy unto his wisdom, honour, and glory. How or in what consideration or respect, the providing for the salvation of the fallen angels or devils, is or would, have been repugnant to the wisdom, and so no ways consistent with the honour of God, is (haply) not unworthy a sober inquiry. But because it is somewhat eccentric to the main business in hand, and the body of our discourse begins to swell to an unacceptable bulk already, we shall decline the penetration of it at present; only offering to consideration, whether their prodigious unnaturalness, or height of misdemeanor in sinning, above what is to be found in the sin of men, either as sinning in Adam, or by actual and personal perpetrations (ordinarily), may not upon a very reasonable account be deemed the cause or reason why it was not honourable for God, or of any good consistence with his holiness or wisdom, to stretch forth a hand of grace, or of salvation unto them. We see in the case of men themselves, that if they sin with a high hand, especially after any considerable means of grace vouchsafed, and turn head upon the light which hath shone clearly to them, or upon the ways of holiness, wherein they have sometimes walked, that God “taketh no pleasure in them,” *i. e.* that they are an abhorring to his soul; and that against all such men who shall commit that most hideous and enormous sin against the Holy Ghost, “he hath” as good as “sworn in his wrath that they shall never enter into his” eternal “rest.” Now if God judgeth it a matter unbecoming his grace, holiness, or wisdom, and no ways consistent with his honour, to impart of that salvation which he hath provided in Christ for men, unto

those for whom it was provided, in case their misdemeanor in sinning shall rise to such a height as hath been mentioned, and as a total and persevering apostasy importeth; can it seem any ways improbable, the devils having desperately apostatised from a far greater light, from a richer and more sensible experience of the grace, love, and bounty of God, than apostates amongst men lightly can do, that his soul should so far abominate them, together with such their stupendous apostasy, as to judge it altogether unmeet for him, unworthy that “inaccessible light” of wisdom, grace, holiness, and glory “wherein he dwelleth,” to conceive so much as a thought within him in order to their salvation ? The schoolmen resolve the irremediableness, as they term it, of the sin and misery of the devils into several causes or grounds, most of which, and these the most material, respect the greatness of their sin, the rest the quality or condition of their natures. Yet if that be true which they assign, among other reasons, why no course should be taken or thought upon by God for or about their salvation, viz. that their wills or appetites are naturally, and by the principles of their creation, unflexible, or unremovable from that object, whether it be good or evil, which they have once chosen, it is a consideration of strength enough alone to carry the business under inquiry clear before it. For if this be an essential property of their natures not to be in any capacity of changing when once they have chosen, it follows at once that, having now chosen apostasy and defection from God, they are by their own act irrecoverably, and against all possibility of redemption, concluded under sin and misery for ever. And if this were the frame and condition of their natures, and themselves conscious and privy to it, (and conscious doubtless they were to the law and terms of their own creation,) it renders their sin unmeasurably sinful and inexcusable above the sinfulness of the sin or sins of men. For though Adam, and so all men in him, knew not, in case he did or should sin, whether he should obtain from God the grace of a Redeemer or no, yet neither did he know the contrary, but knew that he was capable of redemption; so that, though his sin was exceeding great in many considerations otherwise, yet in this behalf it was the more rational, and so the more pardonable and excusable, viz. that he knew himself in a capacity of being restored. Whereas the angels, in case they understood the inflexibility of their wills after an election, and consequently that they were simply and absolutely unredeemable after sinning, and yet



presumed to sin, must needs be the more irrational, and so the more insufferable and inexcusable in their sin. But whether this doctrine of the school, concerning the unchangeableness of the wills of angels, after their first determination, be square and stable, or no, I am, at present, in a fitter posture to query than determine. Only herein my thoughts are all made that the wills of both sorts of angels, as well of those who at first chose righteousness, as of those who made a choice contrary hereunto, remain to this day unchanged; the one in their adherency to the good, the other to the evil, which they chose respectively in the beginning. But this unchangeableness doth not necessarily flow from any unchangeableness in either of them, but may, in the former, arise from the native liberty of their wills, which, as they had power at first to choose that which was good, so have they power, and this with enlargement by means of the sensible experience they gain continually of the sweetness of the good chosen by them, to persevere in this their choice; and in the latter, partly from the just judgment of God denounced against them, and made fully known to them, viz. that he will upon no terms whatsoever be reconciled unto them to the days of eternity; partly also from his absolute and total withdrawing of his Spirit of grace from them. Nor do I apprehend any thing considerable to oppose my belief but that they will, both the one and the other of them, remain upon the same terms unchanged to the days of eternity. Yet were I to build, I had rather choose the former of these for my foundation, because I conceive Scripture evidence more pregnant and clear for it. To say that the will of a creature should and will remain unchanged in that which is good, is no elevation of it above that sphere of excellency which is made for it to move in; but to affirm that at any time it is, or ever will be, thus *unchangeable*, is to make it a companion of his who, in the height of his pride, said, "Ero similis Altissimo," I will be like unto the Most High.

But concerning the unredeemableness of the devils, I much rather approve another reason which the forementioned authors, the schoolmen, give of it. "Diabolus," say they, "peccavit in termino; homo, in via:" *i. e.* The devil sinned being at his journey's end; man sinned (only) by the way. The meaning is, that the devil sinned in an estate of perfect blessedness, under a full fruition of God, in which respect his sin was provoking in the highest. Whereas man, when he sinned, was but in his progress towards such a condition, and was not as yet possessed of it; and

in this respect sinned, though at a very high rate of provocation, his sin simply considered, yet at a far lower rate than the devil, because against a far lower light, and less grace received. But of this enough, if not more than enough, our main business being no more interested in it than we formerly intimated it to be. Nor did the difficulty laid in our way exact of us any thing more than only to prove that it had been no act of grace in God to provide for the salvation of the devil, which, I suppose, hath been done with measure heaped up. Therefore,

5, and lastly, To the plea made for a liberty in God to show and to deny mercy, as and to whom he pleaseth, I answer yet further, that in case it be found a thing utterly and clearly inconsistent with the wisdom of God, or with the goodness and graciousness of his nature, having provided means of salvation as sufficient and proper for the salvation of all as of a few, (which our adversaries neither do, nor with any face of reason can deny,) to limit himself in the consignment or designment of them to the salvation of a few, with a disserviceableness of them as to all the rest, then hath he no liberty to confine or limit himself after any such manner, nor to evacuate the usefulness or beneficialness of these means in respect of the generality of men. This consequence hath been sufficiently argued and proved already, and however, is of itself lightsome enough to make every denier, yea, or questioner of it ashamed. Therefore I assume, for God to limit himself in the consignment of those, means of salvation unto a few, which he hath provided with a sufficiency and aptness for the salvation of all, or to disintend the salvation of the greatest part of men by them, is a thing clearly and utterly inconsistent with the wisdom of God and graciousness of his nature. Therefore he hath no liberty in the case specified to straiten himself within the narrow bounds of such a consignment as that mentioned. In this argument we suppose, and take for granted, that the death of Christ is a means as sufficient for the salvation of all men, and as proper and meet for the salvation of all, as of a few. And in this, I presume, we have no adversary; or, however, the generality of those who are adversaries in the main of the controversy depending, accord with us therein. The reason of the assumption, in the argument now propounded, is, as to the former part of it, because it is notoriously repugnant to the principles of sound wisdom to make waste of any thing which is serviceable or useful for any honourable or worthy end and purpose: and the more precious and difficult of procurement a

means is, the more honourable and excellent the end or purpose is for which it is appropriately and peculiarly serviceable, the more repugnant it is to all principles of wisdom to sacrifice it upon the service of vanity, and to do nothing with it at all. Now, questionless, the death of Jesus Christ is a means most choice and precious; not another of like preciousness, efficacy, or worth, to be procured or levied by God himself: the end for which this death of Christ is most appropriately serviceable, is the salvation of the whole world, which is an end most honourable and worthy. Therefore it must needs be notoriously inconsistent with the wisdom of God to dispose of this means only in order to the procurement and effecting of an end far less honourable, as, namely, the salvation of a few, the obtaining whereof the excellent worth and weight of the said means doth incomparably over-ponderate and transcend: so that a non-disposal of it towards the obtaining of the just and adequate end for which it is appropriately useful and serviceable, is to evacuate and make useless, though not in whole, yet in part, the supertranscendent excellency, worth, and virtue thereof. But of this lately.

The reason of the latter part of the said assumption, is, because it is every whit as repugnant to the nature of grace, goodness and bountifulness of disposition, not to relieve the miserable, who are every ways capable of relief, and this with honour to him that shall relieve them, when a man hath abundantly in his hand wherewith to relieve them, especially when withal he hath no other end or use whereunto to dispose what he hath in this kind but only towards the relief of such persons. And as the apostle John argueth and demandeth concerning men, “Whosoever hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?” 1 John 3:17; in like manner we may well reason, and demand concerning God, If God, having the good of the world to come, means of salvation for his poor lost creature, man, and yet shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of man in him? And yet the Scripture, as *we* formerly heard, speaketh very excellent and glorious things of his love unto men, no where confining it within the narrow circle or sphere of the elect or some few particulars. Nor, indeed, can he, with any congruity of expression, be called *ψάλνθρωπος*, a lover of men, or of mankind, in case he loveth some few particular men only; as he is nowhere in Scripture called GREEK, a lover of angels, although he loves a

very considerable number of this kind of creature, as viz. all his elect or holy angels, because he loveth not all particulars. But of this more largely in the premises, Chap, 16, pages 533, 534. To the point in hand: Certain it is, 1. That God hath no other use or occasion of contrivement of the death of Christ save only for and in order towards the glorifying of himself in and by the salvation of men, or, at least, none other but what would be as effectually promoted and attained By it though it should be intended by him for the salvation of the generality of men. 2. That this death of Christ is every whit as proper and as sufficient a means to bless the whole generation of mankind with salvation as those few whom our adversaries suppose to be only blessed by it in this kind. 3. That it would be no ways dishonourable unto God, nor of any harder consistence with his justice, wisdom, hatred of sin, or with any other of his attributes whatsoever, to intend the salvation of any others, or of all men, by the death of Christ, than it is to intend the salvation of those few whom our adversaries grant to be the objects of his intentions in this kind. 4. That the generality of men, or those whose salvation our adversaries suppose not to be intended by God in or by the death of Christ, are every whit as miserable, and stand altogether in as much need of salvation, as those whose salvation they suppose to have been intended thereby. By the light of these grounds laid together, it plainly appears that it is a thing signally inconsistent with the grace, goodness, mercy, bounty of the Divine Nature or Being to consign the death of Christ to the salvation only of a few, and to suffer the far greatest part of men, (being in every respect as salvable, and this by the same means and with the same proportion to any end whatsoever as they,) to remain miserable and perish everlastingly for want of a like consignment unto them for the same end.

To reply and say, That God gains the manifestation of his sovereignty, or prerogative of showing mercy and denying mercy to whom he pleaseth, by intending the salvation only of a few, which he could not have gained by intending the salvation of all, is to flee to a polluted sanctuary, and which hath been in this very chapter, and formerly, Chap, 4., pages 122,124, razed to the ground, and not so much as one stone thereof left upon another that hath not been thrown down.

Sixthly, That Christ died for all men, without exception of any, I demonstrate further by the light of this argument: "That doctrine whose tenor, frame, and import axe of a direct and clear tendency to promote

and advance godliness amongst men, is, questionless, evangelical and the truth: But such, is the tenor, frame, and import of that doctrine which teacheth that Christ died for all men without exception: Therefore, questionless, this doctrine is evangelical, and none other hut the truth.” The major proposition in this argument needeth no more proof than the sun needs a candle whereby to be seen when he shineth in his might. Yet, if a proof be required, the premises in this discourse will afford it liberally, Chap. 11. and. 12., where we opened that signal character or description of the gospel delivered by the apostle, Tit. 1:1, where he calls it *Αλήθεια ἡ κατ’ ὁσιβιαν*, “the truth according to godliness;” meaning, a body or system of truth, calculated and framed with the most exquisite proportion, efficacy, and aptness that can be imagined, for the promotion, propagation, and advancement of godliness in the world, as we formerly interpreted. So that what particular doctrine soever is found to be of the same tendency, must of necessity be a member of the same body, a branch of the same truth, or, however, clearly and fairly comporting with it, and so a truth. For there is nothing accordable with truth but truth.

The truth of the minor proposition, also, hath been set before the reader in a clear and perfect light, in the precedure of this discourse, where we evinced, above contradiction, that the doctrine of our adversaries, asserting only a limited redemption by Christ leaveth no hope at all, or at most but a very cold, feeble, and faint hope to any ungodly or unregenerate man of being saved by Christ; and consequently, hath nothing in it much quickening or provoking unto godliness, at least, in respect of such persons who are at present ungodly, who are the far greatest part of the world, but is full of a spirit of antipathy and opposition hereunto; inasmuch as whatsoever is of a destructive or discouraging import to any man’s hope of obtaining, upon endeavours, is obstructive and quenching to these endeavours themselves. Whereas the spirit and genius of the doctrine maintained by us is, to fill all men whatsoever with the richest and greatest assurance of hope they can desire, that, upon their diligent and faithful endeavours to repent and to believe, repentance and faith shall be given unto them by God; and that, upon the like endeavours to persevere in a course of repenting and believing, they shall have perseverance also given, and so in the end be unquestionably saved.

What is commonly alleged in defence of the doctrine of limited redemption, against the argument now propounded, hath been fully answered in the place last referred unto, together with whatsoever, I conceive, can lightly be alleged further upon the same account. If I were conscious unto, or could suspect any thing, that with any competent show of probability might be yet objected to the disabling of the force of the said argument, I call God for a record upon my soul that I would not conceal or dissemble it out of any indulgence to mine own opinion. This, in brief, for my sixth argument.

Seventhly, “If Christ died for the elect only, and not for all and every man, then will there no man be found culpable of judgment, or liable unto condemnation or perishing, for or through unbelief, or for not believing on Christ for salvation: But there are many that will be found liable to condemnation, yea, and will be actually condemned for their unbelief: Ergo.” The reason of the consequence in the former proposition is pregnant and clear. First. The elect will not be found liable to condemnation for unbelief, because they, according to the principles of our adversaries, shall be all infallibly drawn or brought to believe. 2. No reprobate can be liable to condemnation for not believing on Christ for salvation, because he transgresseth no law or precept of God by such his unbelief; for, doubtless, God commandeth no man to believe on Christ for salvation but only those for whom there is salvation in him; as he commandeth no man to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Nay, his constant manner and method of teaching, charging, admonishing, and treating with men in other like cases imports that, in case there were no salvation for men in Christ, he would be so far from admonishing or charging them to believe on him, that he would take them off, and dissuade them from believing or depending on him in that kind. For, if we search the Scriptures, we shall still find that God, upon all occasions, counselleth and chargeth men to take heed of uncertain, empty, and vain dependencies, and to seek for help, peace, and safety where they are to be found. Places of this import, are obvious and frequent. “And Samuel said unto the people, Fear *not*; *ye* have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside ; *for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain* ; for the Lord will not forsake his people,” &c. 1 Sam. 2:20, &c. So again: “Trust not in oppression; become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them,” Psal. 62:10. Immediately before, speaking of God, he had said: “Trust him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a he: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.” Elsewhere: “Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings,” Prov. 23:5. So also: “Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in

the desert,” Jer. 17:5, 6. To omit other passages of like consideration without end. It being, then, the constant manner of God in his addressments unto men to dissuade them from begging their bread in desolate places, from laying out their silver for that which is not bread, from leaning upon broken reeds, from expecting rain from clouds without water from putting their trust in things that cannot help or profit, &c., it is at no to be believed that he will counsel or command any man to buy “gold,” or “white raiment” of Jesus Christ, unless he knew that he had both the one and the other for them; to depend upon him for salvation, unless this great and blessed commodity were in his hand ready for them. Yea, it is the manner of God, and so of the Lord Christ also, to take men off, and turn their expectations and dependencies aside even from himself, in respect of a receiving such things from him which he finds them inclined to expect from him, and himself in no posture of mind or will to give them. Upon this account he speaketh unto Jeremiah thus: “Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry or prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee,” Jer. 7:16. The emphasis of all this variety of expression, “pray not, lift not up cry nor prayer, make no intercession,” &c. standeth, I conceive, in this: *viz.* to declare that when he is fully purposed and resolved not to do a thing, he would not have any thing at all, little or much, in one kind or other, done by the creature for the obtaining of it at his hand. He expresseth himself once and again to the same prophet in words of like effect and almost of the same tenor, Jer. 9:14; 14:11. So when he perceived that Amaziah and the men of Judah expected and depended upon his presence with those hundred thousand men of valour, which they had hired with a great sum of money out of Israel to assist them, against the Edomites, and he was fully purposed not to be present with them or to prosper them in battle, he gave knowledge unto Amaziah and those with him accordingly, and by an express from himself, by the hand of a prophet, advised him to discharge this army, which accordingly he did and prospered, 2 Chron. 25:6,7. In like manner our Saviour, in the gospel, knowing that the scribe who came unto him with this profession, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” Matt. 8:19, expected some great accommodations by him in the world, quenched his expectations in this kind with this water cast upon them, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,”



Matt. 8:20. That passage also of his to his disciples savours much of the same spirit: "In my Father's house are many mansions; *if it were not so, I would have told you,*" &c., John 14:2; clearly implying that his disposition and spirit stood to deal clearly and plainly with them about such things which they might and might not expect from him; and that he would not suffer them to look for more from him than what he was fully able and provided of, and withal ready and willing to confer upon them. And it being, as we all know, the determinate counsel and most fixed will and purpose of God not to give salvation unto final impenitents and unbelievers, he hath openly and aloud proclaimed the thing accordingly in the hearing of all the world, that men might not be deceived, frustrated, or undone, by any their expectations from him in this kind. So that we may, without the least regret of mind or thought, conclude, that God enjoineth no man, requireth no man to believe on Jesus Christ for salvation, or to expect salvation by him, but only those for whom he hath purchased or provided salvation, and is accordingly ready and willing to give it unto them. Therefore if the doctrine of our adversaries be orthodox, which teacheth that Christ died not for all men, but for the elect only, certain it is that none but the elect are enjoined by God to believe on him for salvation; and consequently no other person who believeth not on him transgresseth any commandment of God in this his non-believing, and so cannot be liable unto any condemnation at all thereby, much less to the condemnation of hell. This for proof of the major proposition in the argument last proposed.

The tenor of the minor was this: But there are many that will be found liable to condemnation, yea, that will be actually condemned, for unbelief. This proposition hath, I conceive, such pregnant affinity with the express and unavoidable letter of the Scripture, that the mention of a place or two, speaking to the point, will be proof in abundance. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned ; but he that believeth not," (viz. in case this Son of God hath been declared or preached unto him; for it is a nonbelieving in this case only of which he here speaketh,) "is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God," John 3:18. "Is condemned already; *i. e.* his sin in not believing is so notorious, and so provoking in the sight of God, that it carries condemnation, as it were, in the very face of it, and renders the person guilty, as good as condemned, before the sentence of

condemnation passeth from the mouth of the Judge upon him: according to the ancient saying,

**"The self-same day wherein he sinneth,  
The person guilty, himself condemneth"**

Yea, the Scripture itself, the better to set forth the greatness and great danger of the sin of unbelief, speaketh of it much after the same manner. "It was necessary," say Paul and Barnabas with great boldness unto the Jews, "that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, GREEK i.e. and judge, (or, adjudge, *decernitis*,) "yourselves unworthy of eternal life," *i. e.* saith Beza, by this your own fact pass sentence, as it were, and give judgment against yourselves, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles," Acts 13:46. Their rejecting or non-believing in Christ, revealed by the ministry of the gospel unto them, is interpreted by the Holy Ghost as a sentence of condemnation pronounced against themselves by themselves. So again: "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16; meaning not only, if so much, for his other sins, as for his non-believing; as is fully evident from other places, where the high-provokingness of the sin of unbelief, in the sight of God, is very plainly and significantly asserted. "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord?" &c., Heb. 2:2, 3. When he saith, "If we neglect so great salvation," he expresseth or points at unbelief in the ordinary and most proper cause of it, viz. negligence or contempt of the gospel, and of the grace therein offered by God unto the world; which neglect or contempt are sins highly offensive and displeasing unto him. This appears yet more plainly in the parable of the marriage-feast or great supper, where, upon the report of the servant sent forth to invite the guests, of their slight pretences for their not coming, the master of the feast is said to have been angry, and, in the heat of his anger, to have said, that "none of those men that were bidden should taste of his supper," Luke 14:21, 24. Besides, the sin of unbelief is interpreted by the Holy Ghost himself, as a giving of the lie to God, or, which is the same, the making of him a liar: and in this respect it must be a sin highly exasperating and provoking him, and consequently must

needs be a sin exposing the sinner unto condemnation. “He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son,” 1 John 5:10. This proposition, then, being unquestionable, viz. that unbelief, and that by way of demerit, as well (if not rather) as any other sin, and not by the mere pleasure or appointment of God only, rendereth men justly obnoxious unto condemnation, the argument of the last proposal stands impregnable against all assaults; and therefore Christ died for all men without exception, and not for the elect only.

The truth of this conclusion I evince by this demonstration also : “If Christ died not for all men, but for the elect only, then did God put the world, (I mean, the generality of mankind,) into a far better and more desirable state and condition, in the first Adam and under the law of works, than he hath done in the second Adam, or under the law of grace: But this is not so : the world was not at first put by God into a better condition in the first Adam, or under the law of works, than it is in the second Adam, and under the law of grace: Ergo.”

In this argument, I do not apprehend what, according to the principles of our adversaries themselves, can reasonably be denied. The consequence in the proposition opposeth none of these principles; for doubtless none of them gainsayeth any of these propositions, either, 1. that it is a better and more desirable condition to be in a capacity or under a possibility of being saved, than to be in an utter incapacity, or under an absolute impossibility of obtaining this blessedness; or, 2. that in the first Adam all men were alike salvable, being all furnished with gracious abilities for the doing of the will of God, and for the observing of that law upon the observation whereof their life and peace depended, even as Adam himself was furnished in this kind, with whom all men stood in one and the same condition; or, 3, and lastly, that the generality, or far greatest part of mankind are not brought into a capacity of salvation by the second Adam, no satisfaction or atonement being made for their sins by him. They who grant these three conclusions, if they be willing to be led by their own light, cannot stumble at the consequence in the major proposition.

Nor can I conceive wherein the minor should offend them. For it is the uncontroverted sense of all divines, as far as yet I understand, that the second Adam is a far greater benefactor to mankind than the first Adam

was, even whilst his innocency remained with him; and that the condition of men in general is much better under the second covenant, the covenant of grace, than it was under the first, the law, or covenant of works. Nor is it at any hand worthy belief, that God should put the world into a better estate, or posture of well-being in the first man, who “was from the earth, earthy,” than in the second man, who “is the Lord from heaven;” especially considering that it is the constant method of the Almighty in his works and dispensations to begin with that which is less perfect, to proceed unto that which is more, and to conclude with that which is most perfect of all. “First the blade,” saith our Saviour, “and then the ear, and after that,” in the last place, “the full com in the ear,” Mark 4:28. And the apostle tells us, in another case, that “when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part,” or imperfect, “shall be done away,” 1 Cor. 13:10. So that, it seems, that which is perfect is still hindmost in the retinue of God’s proceedings, as Rachel and her children were in Jacob’s march when he went to meet his brother Esau, Gen. 33:2. Thus “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son,” Heb. 1:1, 2. But the path we now speak of hath been so much occupied and beaten with the feet of the providence of the most wise God, that it is visible enough to all the world. As to the particular in hand, viz. that the grace of God abounds to the world much more in the latter, the new covenant, which he hath struck with it in Jesus Christ, than it did in the former covenant made with it in Adam, appears, as in general by those glorious things that are every where spoken of the latter covenant, above any thing so much as intimated concerning the former, so more particularly from that consideration which the apostle suggests unto us in this passage: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one unto condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification,” Rom. v. 16. Whereas he saith that “the judgment was by one” (*i. e.* by reason of or upon the commission of one sin only, as appears from the antithesis in the latter clause, “but the free gift is of many offences,) unto condemnation,” he plainly informeth us, that the first covenant made with the world in the first Adam was so narrow, peremptory, and strict, that in case any person of mankind should at any time, and though but once, have tripped or stepped aside from any thing commanded therein, he became presently a dead man

hereby, wholly bereft of all hope or possibility of being ever recovered or restored to the favour of God by means of this covenant, according to that cited by the same apostle: “Cursed is every one *that continueth* not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” Gal. 3:10. Whereas the covenant of grace made with the world in Jesus Christ is (as we are taught in the words, “but the free gift is of many offences unto justification”) so above measure gracious, that though a man sinneth oft, yea, and this very grievously, yet he is not hereby cut off from a hope of re-enjoying the love of God; nay, by the express tenor of this covenant, he hath assurance from God that, upon his repentance, his sins, how many soever, of what nature soever, shall be forgiven him; yea, and this sealed unto him by baptism, according to that of the evangelists, “John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,” Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3 ; *i. e.* preached this doctrine, that by that “baptism” which he was commanded to administer, God did confirm or seal unto men “the remission of their sins” upon their repentance, in such a sense and manner as Abraham is said to have “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of his faith,” &c. Rom. 4:11, *i. e.* of that justification, or forgiveness of sins, which God, upon and by means of his believing had conferred upon him. This by the way. At what door of evasion an escape can be made from the hand of this argument I cannot readily imagine. If the cause we oppose be any ways defensible against it, it is by some such plea as this: The world, or mankind, may be said to be put into a better condition by Christ, or by the covenant of grace, than it was by Adam, and by the covenant of works, inasmuch as a considerable part hereof is by Christ put into such a capacity of salvation which shall certainly be actuated, and so a great number of men certainly saved; whereas in Adam, though all men were in a capacity, or under a possibility of salvation, yet this capacity was so narrow, weak, or remote, that there was little hope, or probability, that any man would be saved by the means or advantage thereof, which accordingly, as we know, came to pass. Now is it not better for a family, or other community of men, to have good assurance that some of their members shall have great matters of honour and estate bestowed upon them, though all the rest were made incapable of such privileges, than to be at an uncertainty whether any one of them shall be preferred in this kind or no? To this I answer,

1. It is at no hand to be granted, that the whole species, or generality of

mankind, were in Adam invested only with a narrow, faint, remote capacity of salvation or of happiness. For, 1. They were created in an actual possession of happiness, and with the light of God's countenance shining brightly upon them, They were all made "upright," or righteous, Eccles. 7:29, and "in the image of God," Gen. 1:27, and so could not be miserable, and consequently in no danger or likelihood of becoming miserable; for such a condition as this had itself been misery. As for the possibility of becoming miserable with and under which they were created, it imported neither danger nor likelihood of their becoming miserable, being nothing else but an essential distinguishing badge of their creatureship, without which they could no more be made than water without moisture, or the earth without a shadow projectible from it. 2. Concerning the matter of event, nothing can be inferred from hence touching any slipperiness of the place or ground on which they stood in Adam. The greatest unlikelihoods sometimes take place when probabilities vanish, and turn to nothing, as in the fulfilling of that pair of predictions by our Saviour, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first," Matt. 19:30; "The kings of the earth," saith Jeremy in his Lamentations, "and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem," Lam. 4:12; and yet we know they did enter. Who would have said that David, a man attested by God himself for "a man after his own heart," and "one that would fulfil all his pleasure," a man "taught by God from his youth," Psal. 71:17; to whom the "statutes and judgments" of God "were sweeter than the honey, and the honeycomb," Psal. 19:10; "more to be desired than gold, than much fine gold," *ibid.*; a man that had "as great delight in the way of God's testimonies as in all manner of riches," Psal. 119:14; who was "afflicted and ready to die from his youth up," Psal. 88:15, *i. e.* sorely, deeply, and constantly exercised with afflictions from first to last; who, I say, would have said that such a man as this would, together with adultery, have committed murder, and this upon the vilest and most execrable terms, that such a sin, I suppose, was ever known to be committed by any man? And yet we know that such a thing was done even by this man. So again, who would have said, but only he, to whom "the darkness and the light are both alike," Psal. 139:12, that Peter, a disciple so zealously devoted unto his Lord and Master, whose heart a little before was set to stand by him, though "all

men” besides “should forsake him,” yea, rather to “die” with him, than “deny” him, Matt. 26:35, should, all this notwithstanding, soon after, not only “deny” him, and that upon no great account of danger, but forswear him also once and again, and this with a “curse ?” Matt. 26:70, 72, 74. By these and many like experiments that may be added, it sufficiently, I presume, appears that the miscarrying of all men in Adam is no sufficient argument of any deficiency in the foundation of their standing and remaining happy in him. Yea, 3, and lastly for this, They stood upon as good terms in Adam for the continuance of that happiness, in the fruition whereof they were created, and consequently for escaping death and misery, as men ordinarily wish or desire for the security of their lives, their estates, and what otherwise is dear unto them. For who desireth any better terms of assurance for his life or estate, than to be able to defend and make good the one and the other against all assailants that can possibly invade or endanger them; and withal to be in a sufficient capacity of knowing or discovering when any attempt or assault shall be made upon them ? Such a security as this had all mankind in Adam for the perpetuation of that good and happy condition, which was their portion from the gracious and bountiful hand of their Creator, in the day wherein he created them. They were endued with strength every way sufficient to withstand all tempters, and temptations unto sin, yea, and were in a regular capacity to have discovered the approach of any temptation, and of whatsoever might endanger them; and so to have preserved the unspottedness of their native integrity, and consequently to have maintained themselves in an uninterrupted possession of that rich and happy inheritance, which was vested in them by the law of their creation. Therefore,

2. The comparison of the family or community specified in the objection is altogether irrelative to the case in hand; and besides, it demands that, as reasonable to be granted, which is nothing less. For it is not better for the generality of a family or greater community of men, that some few of the members, either of the one or the other, should have the greatest assurance that can be given of the greatest things that can be enjoyed, all the rest of their members being left to unavoidable beggary, torment, and misery, than that all particulars of either should be put into such a capacity and way of being all honourable and happy, that by a regular, prudent, and careful behaviour of themselves, and managing the

opportunities which are before them, there should none of them miscarry, nor fail of such enjoyments. For thus the comparison ought to be stated, to make it truly representative of the great business whereof we are in travail. Now it is not better for the generality of a state, or great commonwealth, that some two or three, or some small and inconsiderable number of the members or inhabitants thereof, should be great favourites of the prince, or of those in chief places, and have riches, honours, offices, and places of power heaped upon them without end, all the rest being made slaves, and divested of all capacity, so much as of any tolerable subsisting in the state, than it would be, that all and every of the said members, or inhabitants, should be put into a hopeful and ready way, by their regular industry and honest demeanour of themselves, to thrive, and lift up their heads, and live like men ; although in the meantime they might, either through voluntary and supine carelessness and sloth, or through some vile practices otherwise, deprive themselves of such happiness. That cannot be better for the generality of any community of men, which induceth an absolute necessity of extreme misery upon the far greater part of them, though attended with all imaginable advantages to some few, than that which is as an effectual door opened unto them all, unto all happiness, although it be not so opened, but that they may, through a supine negligence, and unfaithfulness to their own interest, shut it against themselves. That which is worse for the greater part, cannot be better for the whole. So then our argument last propounded remains still in full force: Christ certainly died for all men; because otherwise the world or generality of mankind, should have been better and more graciously dealt with, and provided for by God in the first Adam, than in the second.

The same doctrine I confirm yet further by the seal and warrant of this argument: If Christ died not for all men without exception, then no man whatsoever, in his unregenerate estate, stands bound to believe in him, or to depend on him, at least with any certainty of faith or hope for salvation: But there are many men who, in their unregenerate estate, stand bound thus to believe in him and depend upon him; yea, all men without exception, at least all that have not yet sinned the sin unpardonable, stand bound thus to believe and thus to depend: Ergo.

The reason of the sequel in the former proposition, is, because no man stands bound to do that which he hath not a sufficient ground or reason



to do; or, to speak somewhat more warily, for the doing of which there is no sufficient ground or reason. Yea, the doing of any thing upon such terms, I mean without a sufficient ground in reason for the doing it, is an act irregular, sinful, and displeasing unto God. "That the soul be without knowledge," saith Solomon, "it is not good: and he that hasteth with his feet, sinneth," Prov. 19:2. The former clause was rendered somewhat more plainly in our former translation, thus: "Without knowledge the mind is not good i. e. though a man in what he doth, means or intends never so well, yet unless he knows or apprehends a sufficient reason or ground for what he doth, his good meaning will not justify him, or make him sinless in his action; according to what followeth in the latter clause, "But he that hasteth with his feet," i.e. that is forwarder in his affections than in his judgment, that falls upon action, before he knows a good cause why and wherefore he so acteth, "sinneth." Upon this account our Saviour reproveth the man that saluted him by that honourable and divine title of, good: "Why callest thou me, good? there is none good but one, which is God," Matt. 19:17. Doubtless the meaning of the man, in styling him, "good," was good, and proceeded from a reverend opinion of him: yea, in styling him, "good," he spake nothing but truth, and that according to our Saviour's own principles, inasmuch as he was indeed God. Yet because the man had not this knowledge of him, and so no sufficient reason for what he did, or said, in calling him, "good," therefore he reproveth him for so doing or speaking. To this point also lieth that of the apostle, "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" Rom. 14:23, i. e. whatsoever a man doth, not having a sufficient ground in reason, one or more, on which to ground a belief or persuasion of the lawfulness of it, is sinful; viz. quoad hominem, in respect of the doer, not always, or necessarily, quoad rem, or in the nature of the thing itself. Yea, to believe any thing, without a sufficient ground in reason to satisfy or convince a man of the truth of it, the Holy Ghost termed the belief of the simple or foolish, according to that of Solomon, "The simple believeth *every* word," Prov. 14:15; or, as our former translation read it, "The foolish will believe every thing," i. e. as well that, for which there is good reason why it should be true, as that for which there is none, which is a lash, loose, and unsavoury kind of faith, and such as God relisheth not, regardeth not, no not when the object of it, or the thing believed, is a truth. For "God," as the wise man informeth us, "delighteth not in fools," Eccles. 5:4. So that if

there be no sufficient ground in reason, why any unregenerate person should believe or depend on Christ for salvation with certainty of faith, most certain it is that he stands not bound in duty hereunto. Now if Christ died only for the elect, and no unregenerate person certainly knoweth, or can know, that he is one of the elect, it is a clear case that he can have no sufficient ground in reason to believe or depend upon him upon such terms. That no unregenerate man certainly knoweth, or can know, that he is one of the elect, hath been proved formerly, and that ex abundanti; viz. where it was fully evinced, that no unregenerate person hath so much as any probable ground whereon to judge that he is elected. If it be objected, Yes, an unregenerate person hath the command of God to believe or depend on Christ for salvation, and this is a sufficient ground in reason for him to do accordingly. To this I answer, by granting the whole argument; but retrench, that if unregenerate persons have the command of God to depend on him for salvation it is upon the ground lately evinced, above all contradiction, viz., that there is salvation in him for them, and, consequently, purchased by him for them by his death. For he hath salvation for no man upon any other account, John 12:24. So that this objection rather strengthened than weakened the doctrine we maintain.

The minor proposition in the argument last advanced by us, which only affirmed, as to the exigency of our cause, that many unregenerate persons stand bound in duty to believe on Christ for salvation, is too rich in evidence to stand in need of proof. For, 1. The Scripture said expressly, that "God now commanded all men every where," and, therefore, unregenerate men as well as others, "to repent," Acts 17:30; if to repent, then to believe also; inasmuch as there can be no sound repentance, such as God commanded, without faith. And if so be men yet unregenerate stand not bound in duty or conscience to believe on Christ, then is it no matter of sin in them to make God a liar.

"For he that believeth not God maketh him a liar, because he believeth not the record God gave of his Son," 1 John 5:10; meaning, that whosoever justified or believeth God. in the record he hath given of his Son, must needs believe on him: viz. because the tenor of this record is, that "whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, he that believeth this, can no more refuse or forbear to believe on Christ than he can be content eternally to perish, or refuse everlasting

life, as not worthy his believing for the obtaining of it. But, doubtless, it is sinful in any man to make God a liar, (i. e. either to do, or to neglect to do, any act, by the doing or neglect whereof God is any ways represented as untrue of his word, as he is by any man's non-believing on Christ,) and consequently, every man, except the before excepted, stands bound in duty and conscience to believe on Christ. Again, secondly, if no unregenerate men had any band of duty or precept from God lying upon them to believe on Christ, whosoever of this sort of men should at anytime believe on him should supererogate, and do more than what he is by God commanded to do; and, consequently, all believers, without exception, should be supererogators in their first act of believing, because, until now they were unregenerate persons. But the proof of this proposition is, I suppose, supererogatory, and more than any darkness or doubtfulness in it, yea, and haply, more than our adversaries themselves require.

Therefore, we pass on to another argument.

“If God intended not the death of Christ for all men, and that in order to their salvation, then have not all men a sufficiency of means vouchsafed unto them whereby to be saved. But all men have a sufficiency of means in this kind vouchsafed unto them: Ergo:” The consequence in the former proposition is pregnant without proof. For it is greater than contradiction, that they who have no propitiatory sacrifice offered up for them, nor atonement made for their sins, have no sufficiency of means for salvation. So that if God intended no such oblation, no such atonement for any man or number of men, most certain it is that such men are in no capacity of salvation; and, consequently, can have no sufficiency of means whereby to be saved.

The truth of the minor proposition, which avoucheth a sufficiency of means vouchsafed by God unto all men whereby to be saved, might be evidenced by sundry demonstrations. But because the complete and full demonstration of this proposition is one of the most considerable achievements to be undertaken and managed in the second part of the work in hand, I shall, for the present, only propose some few considerations for the proof of it, respite the thorough arguing of them until that opportunity.

First, then, If all men have not a sufficiency of means vouchsafed unto them whereby to be saved, then God dealeth with men far more

distinctly, and with greater severity in the new covenant, the covenant of grace, than he did in the first covenant, which was a covenant of works. The reason hereof is, because in, or under the covenant of works, men were invested by God with sufficient means for the performance of that covenant, and so for the obtaining of the great reward promised or covenanted therein, which was no less than eternal life, though possibly, not a life so rich in blessedness as that covenanted with men in the covenant of grace. That all men, without exception, had a sufficiency of means in Adam to have persisted in innocency, and to perform all the articles and terms required of them in that covenant, which was made with them in him, is the sense of all men learned in the Scriptures, as well modern as ancient, that yet I have heard of; nor will it, I suppose, be denied by our adversaries themselves. If it should, there is proof upon proof at hand to make it good; but what needs a levy of men to gain that by force which is voluntarily offered? Now, then, it being far greater rigour and severity to impose such terms or conditions upon a man, in order to the saving of his life, or for the obtaining of any desirable good, which are of an impossible performance unto him, than to impose only such which he hath competent abilities to perform; evident it is, that God must needs be more rigorous and hard unto men in the covenant of grace, made with them in and by Christ, than he was in the covenant of works made with them in Adam, in case it be supposed that he required impossible conditions of them in the former, and only such which were possible in the latter.

But that God dealeth more graciously and bountifully with men in the second covenant, made with them in Christ, than he did in the first, which was made with them in Adam, is the pregnant result of all things (in a manner) that God hath spoken unto the world by his Son in the gospel. Nor can our adversaries themselves deny it without the loud reclamation of evidence and truth. To pretend that God dealeth more graciously and bountifully with his elect in the covenant of grace, than he did in the covenant of works but not with the generality of men, is but a slim evasion, and supposeth, either that the covenant of grace is not made with the generality of men, (which is a notorious untruth, and hath been detected accordingly once and again already) or that this covenant is not made upon the same terms and conditions, with all those interested or included in it; which is a conceit of no whit better an accord, either with

reason or truth. Secondly, If all men have not a sufficiency of means granted unto them by God, then God dealeth with the generality, or far greatest part of men, more rigorously and with less mercy, and this under the covenant of grace, than he doth with the devils themselves. The reason is plain; because, in case men have not a sufficiency of means whereby to be saved, they have only means given them whereby to increase their condemnation; yea, such means, and so and upon such terms given them, that they cannot but use them to their greater and more heavy condemnation, than that whereunto they should or could have been liable, had no such covenant of grace been made with them or tendered unto them. For if they be not enabled by God to repent and to believe the gospel, they must needs be subjected to an absolute necessity of despising or neglecting it; there being no medium between accepting the great salvation brought unto them therein, which is done by faith, and the neglecting of it, which is always accompanied with unbelief. Now a neglect of the gospel, and of the great salvation tendered therein by God unto men, is the first-born of provocations in the sight of God, and maketh men seven-fold more the children of wrath and of death, than otherwise they would have been. "How shall we escape," saith the apostle, "if we *neglect* so great salvation?" &c. Heb. 2:3; implying that this sin is unquestionably more exasperating, incensing, enraging the Almighty against his creature man, than any other sin or sins whatsoever. Yea, if a man by means of the gospel and the grace offered unto him therein be not brought to repentance, and to a forsaking of ways and practices of sin, the sins themselves, which he shall commit under the gospel, will turn to a far deeper and more dreadful account in condemnation unto him, than the like sins without the gospel would have done. So that it is clear on every side, that in case men be not enabled by God to repent and believe the gospel, the exhibition and tender of the gospel unto them must needs be a heaping of coals of fire upon their heads by God, a project and design to render them two-fold or rather a hundred-fold more the children of hell, misery, and torment, than otherwise they had been. Whereas most certain it is, that God hath designed nothing, acted nothing, in one kind or other to increase the punishment or condemnation of the devils, especially in any way of an unavoidable necessity, above the demerit of their first sin.

Thirdly, If God doth not vouchsafe sufficient means unto all men,

whereby to repent, believe, and so to be saved, then will he condemn and destroy (or at least increase the condemnation and destruction of) far the greatest part of men, for that which is no sin, (I mean impenitency and unbelief.) For, 1. I suppose that it is no sin at all in the creature, not to perform or do any such act, which is proper only for God himself to do, or which requires the lighting down of his omnipotent arm to effect it. 2. I suppose (that which hath been both lately and formerly proved) that God doth and will condemn and destroy men for impenitency and unbelief. So then if to repent and to believe, be such acts or works in the soul which cannot be produced, raised or performed by men by means of that strength, or those abilities which are vouchsafed unto them, but absolutely require the omnipotent power of God to effect them, it is no ways more sinful in the creature not to exert or perform them, than it is not to be God; and consequently if God should punish men for the non-performance of them, he should punish them for that which in such a case, and upon such a supposition would be no sin. Yea, if God should punish men for not endeavouring or not doing that which is in their power to do, in order to repenting and believing, he should punish them for not attempting to make themselves equal in power unto God.

Fourthly, If God, hath not vouchsafed a sufficiency of power to believe unto those, who notwithstanding do not believe, then did our Saviour without any ground or cause in the least, wonder at the unbelief of many in the gospel: yea, and at the faith of others “And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he  *marvelled because of their unbelief,*” Mark 6:6. On the other hand, “when Jesus heard it,” *i. e.* the answer of the centurion, “he  *marvelled,* and said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so  *great faith,* no, not in Israel,” Matt. 8:10. First, there is not the least cause. or occasion why any man should marvel that creatures or second causes should not act above their sphere, yea, though there be the greatest conjunction of such means which are proper and helpful unto them in order to such actings which He within their sphere. As for example: though the year be never so seasonable and fruitful, yet there is not the least occasion to marvel or think it strange that the thorn should not bring forth grapes, or the thistle figs. So in case there be twenty great lights shining in a room, it is no matter of wonder at all that a blind man seeth nothing at all that is before him. In like manner, in case it be

supposed that men are utterly destitute of a power of believing, there is not the least air or colour of an occasion why any man should think it strange that they should not believe, what helps or advantages soever for or towards believing they have otherwise. So again, when causes or means which are known to act necessarily, uniformly, and constantly in their way, do move and act accordingly, there is not the least occasion given why any man should marvel or wonder at it. When the sun shineth or fire burneth, when birds fly, or fishes swim, no man is tempted or provoked to the least degree of admiration. Nor is there any whit more reason or cause of marvel that any person at any time should believe, though under the greatest disadvantages for believing, in case it be supposed and known that that cause which worketh or produceth faith in men, as viz. the power of God, by which faith is always produced in men, when they do believe, should always work or act necessitatingly or irresistibly in the production of it. Possibly the grace of God, by which men under signal disadvantages are, according to our adversaries' principles, necessitated to believe, may be just matter of admiration unto men; but the vouchsafement of such grace supposed, the act of believing in men is no ground of admiration at all; no more than it was under the law to see a man making haste to his city of refuge, being hotly and closely pursued by the avenger of blood; or than now it would be to see a young infant a mile from home being carried along in the parent's arms. However, to add this by the way, I incline to think that the reason of our Saviour's marvelling upon the centurion's answer was not simply and absolutely the excellency or greatness of his faith discovering itself thereby, but in part, the strangeness of the stupidity and unmanlikeness of spirit in those of Israel, which he was occasioned to remind and consider, by the notableness of that faith, which shined in a man who was, and had been, in all likelihood, a pagan, and a soldier, and an officer of rank amongst soldiers,—all which, in their respective natures, and according to common experience, which still follows the natures of things and discovers them, are disadvantages to believing. The words mentioned have a breathing of such an import: "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said, I have not found so great faith, *no, not in Israel.*" If believing depends upon the omnipotent exertions of God, after any such manner, as our adversaries imagine, our Saviour could have no competent reason to marvel, either that it should be found where it was, or not found where

it was not; unless this should be a ground of marvelling unto him, that God by his omnipotency, should be able to work faith in whom he pleaseth; or that man should not act and do more than he hath power to do, yea, or than all the creatures in heaven or in earth can enable him to do, I mean, believe.

Fifthly, If they who believe not have no sufficiency of power vouchsafed by God to believe, then is the faith of those who do believe no reasonable or just matter of reproof or shame unto those who believe not: But the Scripture often puts those who believe not to rebuke and shame, by mentioning unto them the examples of those who do believe: Ergo. This latter proposition needs no other proof but only the sight and consideration of these and such like passages. “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him,” Matt. 21:32. “The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here,” Matt. 12:41. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world,” &c. Heb. 11:7. From such places as these, it is evident that the faith, repentance, and obedience of the saints, or of such persons who do believe, repent, and obey, are just matter of condemnation, unto those who believe not, repent not, obey not, and represent them as inexcusable. But now, to make good the sequel in the major proposition, these worthy actings and deportments of those in whom they are found would be no ways considerable for any such end or purpose as the shaming or condemning of unbelieving, impenitent, and disobedient persons, unless it be supposed that these have, or had, or at least might have had, and this upon the same terms with those other, the like power and abilities whereby to believe, repent, and obey, as they did or do. The casting great matters into the treasury by rich men was no disparagement or matter of shame to the poor widow that cast in two mites only, because these two mites were her whole substance; she was not able to cast in more; in which respect our Saviour himself gives her this testimony, that “she had cast in more than they all.” Their casting in great matters would have been matter of just disparagement unto her in she had been as wealthy as they, and should



have cast in her two mites only. Nor is the flying of a fowl in the air any disparagement to a man in that he doth not the like: nor is the speaking of Greek and Hebrew by him who hath been seven years at school to learn these tongues, and hath had the help of men expert and skilful in them to direct him, any matter of disparagement to an infant of days who is not as yet capable of such education, though he speaketh them not. And generally where there is not an equality of strength, means, and abilities for the performance of an action that is commendable, the performance of it by him or them who have the advantage of strength and means in this kind doth no ways reflect disparagement upon the others, though they perform it not. If those who do believe have the omnipotency of Heaven to assist them in believing, nay, to necessitate them to believe, certainly their believing is no matter of disrepute or disgrace unto those who believe not, especially if it be supposed that they have no power at all to believe.

Sixthly, If God's purpose and intent be to stop the mouths of all such persons, and to leave them without excuse who shall prove wicked, ungodly; unbelieving, &c., then doth he vouchsafe sufficiency of power and of means to repent and believe, and; so to be saved. But the consequent is true and most unquestionably evident from the Scriptures: therefore the antecedent is true also, viz. that God doth vouchsafe a sufficiency of power or means unto all men whereby to believe, &c. That Gods purpose is, and that he maketh provision accordingly, to stop the mouths of all wicked and ungodly men, so that they shall have nothing with any colour of reason or equity to plead for themselves why the sentence of eternal death should not pass upon them when they come to appear before his tribund, is, for truth, as clear as the light at noon-day from these, and such like places: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, to GREEK, i.e. to the intent they should be without excuse," Rom. 1:20, as our former translators rendered, meaning, in case they should neglect the "glorifying of God" by depending upon him, serving, and obeying him. Our last translation maketh no difference as to our purpose, rendering the words thus: "so that they are without excuse for if they, the heathen, be "without excuse," by the means vouchsafed unto them by God, whereby to glorify him, certainly it was his intent to render or make them so by the said

means. So again: “Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world,” viz. of ungodly persons, “may become guilty before God,” Rom. 3:19; or subject to the judgment of God, as our former translation rendered the original GREEK, i. e. found guilty upon such terms that the judgment of God in their condemnation may appear every ways equitable and justifiable. I omit other places. Light enough shineth from these cited to discover this for a certain truth, that God intends the inexcusableness of all impenitent and unbelieving persons.

Upon this foundation of truth I build this inference, in the major proposition, that therefore it must needs be that he vouchsafed a sufficiency of power or means unto all men to repent and believe. The reason of this consequence is plain, viz. because the plea of insufficiency or want of strength for the doing of what is commanded, is the first-born of apologies or excuses in the case of non-performance; yea, it is an excuse passable not only with all ingenuous and well-composed men, but even with those that are of rough, stern, and severe principles, if they be not absolutely bewitched or besotted with the senselessness of express tyranny. The person whom the king found amongst his guests without a wedding garment, being demanded by him how he came in thither not having this garment, “was,” saith the parable, “speechless,” Matt. 22:12. Doubtless, if he could with truth, or with the consent of his conscience, have made such an answer as this, that he had not wherewithal, or that he wanted means, to procure a wedding garment, he would have pleaded it, yea, would have been excused by the king upon such a plea: whereas now he must be “bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.” So in the parable of the talents, if the “unprofitable servant” could have given this account unto his master with truth or with, the verdict of his own conscience, that he had not a sufficiency of power granted unto him to improve his talent, as the rest of his fellow-servants had, or, that it was not possible for him to have given his master content in the improvement of it, or the like, it had been another manner of excuse or plea than that which he insisted upon, to his further entanglement, as the purport of the parable in that behalf declared. Matt. 25:24–27.

To pretend that men are sufficiently inexcusable before God for neglecting or not doing many other things which they have power to do, though it be not supposed that they have sufficient power to believe, is to

serve the glory of God with an inexcusableness of their own devising, and which falls short many degrees in reaching the counsel and purpose of God for the advancement of his glory in that behalf. For his purpose is not to bring an inexcusableness upon the heads of wicked and impenitent men only in respect of some lesser or lighter, whether omissions or commissions, but in respect of that great and capital sin also, unbelief, yea, mainly and chiefly in respect of this. Now, men cannot appear before God inexcusable upon the account of their infidelity or unbelief, unless it be supposed that they had been sufficiently furnished by him with means, abilities, and opportunities for believing.

At this turn our adversaries are wont to take sanctuary under. Adam's wing; but this is too narrow to cover them. All men, they say, received sufficient power in Adam to believe, and upon this account God may justly hold them inexcusable if they do not believe. This plea is like a commodity fetched from a far country, which turns to no account when it is brought home. For,

1. There hath nothing yet been brought upon any stage, where I have been spectator, that acted the part of a rational or probable proof that all men were in Adam invested with a power of believing. There is this reason pregnant and strong against it. If Adam, yet innocent, (for in this consideration only We now speak of him,) had a power of believing, then might he actually have believed, if he had pleased: but it was not possible that Adam, during his innocency, should actually believe; because all this while there was no word of revelation from God concerning Jesus Christ, without which there is no possibility of actual believing. To pretend that Adam, and so all men in Adam, had a power or principle vested in him whereby he was able to believe whatsoever God should at any time, reveal unto him, and consequently to believe the gospel, in case it had been discovered unto him, as now it is unto men, is to speak with no good accord to their own principles, and with less accommodation to their cause. For,

- 1.1. If there was a sufficiency of power given unto Adam whereby to believe, then it is a plain case that believing requireth not the interposal of the omnipotency of God in any extraordinary way to procure, raise, or effect it: for, doubtless, this omnipotency was not given unto Adam; and that which in one case or at one time cannot be effected without a concurrence of omnipotency, neither can it be effected without the same

at another.

1.2. Neither is a power to believe whatsoever God shall reveal, a power of believing savingly or to justification, according to the principles of our adversaries, who generally term such a believing (I mean, a believing of what God hath revealed in the gospel) an historical faith, and make it specifically distinct from that faith which justifieth, defining this to be a recumbency, resting, or relying upon Christ for justification. Therefore, however, men did not receive any power in Adam to believe upon such terms or with such a kind of faith which now God requireth of them to their justification. And to say or prove that Adam, or all men in Adam, received power to believe with any other kind of faith than that which now, in the lapsed state of man, justifieth, is but to say or prove *ἀντροσδιόννσα*, that which is broadly eccentric and irrelative to the business in hand.

1.3. Suppose that to believe the gospel were justifying faith, which my faith believeth it to be, and that Adam had power to have believed it, and so all men in him, in case it had been revealed unto him, *i.e.* so revealed that he had certainly known that the revelation came from God, (and that he should have power to believe it upon any other account of revelation than this, is an improbability of the first magnitude,) doubtless, all men now are invested with a power of believing it upon such terms, *viz.* in case it shall be revealed unto them so that they shall certainly know that the revelation cometh from God. For though the apostle John speaketh of unbelievers under the gospel as men that “make God a liar,” in that “they believe not the record that he hath given of his Son,” 1 John 5:10, yet his meaning is not to charge them with offering this indignity unto God knowingly, wittingly, and, as it were, to his face, or as if they knew well enough this record to have been given by him, and yet would not trust or believe him therein; but by their unbelief at this great point, they are said to “make him a liar” in this sense, *viz.* because they reject that as a fable or untruth, which yet hath been spoken and asserted by God himself for truth, yea, and that upon such terms, that by a diligent and strict inquiry they might come to a certain knowledge that it was spoken and asserted by him. For otherwise the light of nature and force of conscience are scarcely in any man, much less in the generality of unbelievers, so far wasted or spent with sinning as that they can immediately and directly, or any otherwise than constructively, or in a consequential, indirect, and

remote way, call God a liar. Therefore, doubtless, if men received no other power in Adam to believe than only in case of such a revelation of the gospel made unto him, or them in him, by God, which he or they must needs know came from God, they received no other power of believing, in him, whilst he stood, than what they generally receive by or from Christ since Adam's fall. So that to fetch the inexcusableness of men in the sin of their unbelief, from Adam, is to travel to the Indies, with extreme hazard and expense, to bring the same commodity from thence which a man hath, and this every ways as well conditioned, and in sufficient quantity for his purpose, at his own home.

1.4. If all men received power in Adam to believe savingly, or to justification, then must Adam himself needs be supposed to have received this power. If so, then must it be supposed withal to have been some ways useful, beneficial, and serviceable for some end and purpose of concernment unto him. For to conceive that it was a mere impertinency or superfluity is an unsavoury notion. If the power we speak of were any ways useful unto Adam, then was it useful either for the enabling him to believe unto justification whilst he remained yet innocent, or, in case he should fall, to carry along with him into his lapsed condition, that in this he might be enabled by it to believe accordingly. But that it was not useful to him in the former consideration is evident, because during his estate of innocency he remained under a covenant of works, in which case he neither had any necessity of believing in order to his justification, having not yet sinned; or if any necessity in this kind had been upon him, his believing could not have justified him, inasmuch as the law of justification by faith was not yet given or published by God. Nor was it, or could it be useful unto him in the latter consideration; for, doubtless, he carried nothing saving or justifying with him out of his estate of innocency into his lapsed condition, which was a Condition of sin, misery, and condemnation, especially until the promise of a Saviour was given, and that trumpet of the great jubilee had sounded, that "the seed of the woman should bruise," or break, "the serpent's head." Gen. 3:15.

1.5, and lastly for this, It is no ways probable that men received power in Adam to believe, or at least that any such power, though received in him, is of any account with God to render men inexcusable under the sin of unbelief in the days of the gospel, (which is of equal conducement to

our purpose,) because the Holy Ghost assigns other grounds and reasons, as we lately heard, to assert this inexcusableness, but no where gives the least intimation, either of any such power to believe as we now oppose, received by men in Adam, much less of any relation which this power should have to that inexcusableness of unbelievers under the gospel, which God hath projected or provided for upon other terms. Therefore,

2. Suppose it should be granted, that men generally did receive in Adam such a power of believing which is so much contended for, yet God having made a second, a new covenant, a covenant of much more grace, love, and mercy with them, (whereof substantial and large proof hath been made in the premises,) it is no ways consonant either to the wisdom of God or to the unsearchable riches of his grace, in this new covenant, that he should proceed in judgment against them upon any advantage taken from their condition under the first covenant. If men will here be peremptory, and say that such proceedings in judgment against men are consonant enough both to his wisdom and to his grace, in the new covenant, let them either, 1, produce some Scripture to evince such a consonancy ; or else, 2, let them confess and profess that they are in a sufficient capacity, by means of that light of reason, judgment, and understanding that shineth in them, to judge and conclude what is agreeable to the wisdom or grace of God, without warrant and direction from the Scriptures. To decline both these is, being interpreted, to profess will and obstinacy under the name of judgment. The former, I am certain, they cannot do ; if they do the latter, they sin against the first-born of those principles which they chiefly employ in the defence and maintenance of their cause. But,

3, and lastly for this also, The Scriptures themselves, as they are altogether silent of any purpose or intent in God to judge or condemn men upon any thing for which they may seem accountable from the first covenant made with them in Adam, so do they frequently mention and assert the counsel and purpose of God to proceed in the judgment and condemnation of men by the gospel, and upon such articles relating to the covenant of grace, of the neglect or breach whereof men shall be found guilty: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the *word that I have spoken, the same shall judge* him in the last day,” John 12:48. He doth not say, “the word that I have spoken shall judge him,” &c., but, “*the same shall judge him,*” &c., which,

doubtless, hath this emphatical import, that the word which he hath spoken, (since his coming in the flesh, or in the gospel,) and no other word whatsoever but this, shall “judge him,” (i. e. be insisted upon to evict him guilty, or worthy of condemnation.) As for all that the apostles spake in their preaching the gospel, and what other ministers thereof speak in theirs, so far as they preach the truth of the gospel, or that which being neglected will render men liable unto judgment, is constructively, and in effect, but the same word with that which Christ taught and spake in the flesh. In like manner the apostle Paul, speaking of himself, and his fellow-apostles, and all ministers of the gospel, expresseth himself thus: “For we are unto God a sweet,” or the sweet, “savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish,” 2 Cor. 2:15. How was the apostle, or how are the faithful ministers of the gospel, the “sweet savour of Christ unto God in those who perish?” viz. as the effectual tender of Christ unto men, in the name of God, for their salvation, rendereth them utterly inexcusable, and every ways, and most justly liable to the judgment of God, if they accept him not by believing on him. So elsewhere he asserts disobedience to the gospel as the great article of indictment against those that shall be “destroyed” by “Jesus Christ, when he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire,” &c. 2 Thess. 1:7, 8. And most frequently the sentence of condemnation is bent against the sin of non-believing and neglect of the gospel, Mark 16:16; Heb. 2:2, 3; John 8:24, &c. So that there is no colour, but that which is very washy, for any power of believing received in Adam by the generality of men; and yet less colour is there for such a conceit as this, that God should bring the vengeance of eternal fire upon their heads for not believing with that power which they received in Adam; for other power to believe besides this our adversaries allow them none. Questionless the Holy Ghost, who is so solicitous from place to place to vindicate the righteousness and equity of God’s proceedings in the condemnation of wicked and unbelieving men, would have insisted more or less upon that ground which our adversaries make the *prora* and *puppis*, the first and last of his vindication in this kind, (I mean their investiture in Adam with power to believe,) had there, 1, been any such investiture: and, 2, had the consideration thereof been of any value for such a purpose.

Seventhly, If all men have power to believe, 1, that God is; 2, that he is a rewarder of those that seek him, then have they power to believe

justifyingly, or to acceptation with God: But all men have this power: Ergo. The consequence in the major proposition the apostle makes unquestionable, where he saith, “He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of those that seek him,” Heb. 11:6. By “coming unto God,” it is clear, by the whole carriage of the context round about, that he meaneth a coming unto him with acceptation, and so as *εὐαριστήσαι*, to please him. And Calvin himself, all along his commentaries upon the place, taketh it for granted that the apostle speaketh of such a faith, or believing, quæ gratiam apud Deum conciliet, which procureth grace and favour with God.

The minor proposition is the sense of learned men generally, especially of such who have acquainted themselves with the writings of philosophers, and other studious and learned men amongst the heathen. In these writings they find many sayings, wherein the authors do not only avouch the certainty and unquestionableness of the being of God, but that very property also, the belief whereof the apostle here principally requireth to give a man access with acceptation unto God, viz. his being “a rewarder of those who seek him.” And besides the apostle himself expressly affirms, that *τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, i. e. that which is knowable of God, (or, as Calvin interprets it, “Quod de Deo cognosci opersepretium est,” i. e. that which is worth a while to be known of God,) was *ψανερὸν ἰν αὐτοῖς*, manifest in them, or to them; yea, and further, that God himself “made it” thus “manifest.” Rom. 1:19. A little after, he chargeth them thus, that “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations,” &c. Rom. 1:21, assigning this for the ground and cause of that most severe and dreadful proceeding of God in judgment against them, in delivering them up to “a reprobate mind, to vile affections, to uncleanness,” &c. Now, questionless, 1, This “glorifying of God as God,” imports, amongst other things, a believing, trusting, depending on him, as “a rewarder of those who seek him.” For they who do not thus believe or depend upon him, cannot be said, whatsoever they shall measure unto him besides, to “glorify him as God.” 2. As certain it is, that had they not had a sufficiency of power thus to have “glorified him,” (I mean, “as God,” and as “a rewarder of those who seek him,”) the neglect or non-performance of it would have been no provocation in the sight of God so signally exasperating or provoking, as to have kindled a fire of such high



indignation in his breast against them, which should bum so near to the bottom of hell as that specified. "The servant," saith our Saviour, "that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes," Luke 12:48. Yea, doubtless, had not this servant been in a capacity of knowing "his lord's will," in case he had been duly inquisitive after it, he had not been "beaten with" any "stripes" at all, though he had committed such things which had been "worthy of stripes" in other men. This is evident from that great principle of equity attested by our Saviour in the words immediately following, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," ("of him," i. e. of him only,) and consequently not of others, to whom little hath been given. And if we shall go along with the said principle whither it will directly lead us, we shall be brought by it to this conclusion, that unto whomsoever nothing is given, of him nothing will be required; as in the parable of the talents, we hear of no servant called to account but only such who had received talents, one or more. Therefore, without controversy, the heathen generally had, and have power, means, and opportunities sufficient to come to the knowledge of this gracious property in God, that "he is a rewarder of those who seek him," and consequently of "coming to him" with acceptation. And let me add this by the way, That he that hath a sufficiency of power and means to come to the knowledge or belief, 1, that "God is," 2, that "he is a rewarder of those who seek him," is not by this sufficiency simply necessitated either to believe the one or the other. It is with the generality of men in this respect as it is with God himself; as well the one as the other have power to do many things which yet they do not, and therefore are not by a power of acting necessitated unto action. Yea, it is a principle owned by our adversaries themselves, that men generally have power to do more than they do; and it is an unquestionable rule in the art of reason, that a negatione actus, ad negationem potentiae, non valet argumentum. So that in case it should or could be proved, (which I believe never yet was, nor ever will be proved,) that no heathen wanting the letter of the gospel, and the oral ministry of it, ever yet believed on God to justification, or was accepted with him, yet would it be no sufficient proof that therefore they had no power thus to believe on him, or to do that upon the doing whereof they should have been accepted with him. But that the heathen had, and have, power vouchsafed unto them by God whereby to repent

and to believe, if their will were answerable to their power in this kind, might be yet further evidenced by a far greater vote from the Scriptures, but that in levying this here we should anticipate a considerable part of our intentions relating to the second part of this work. And besides, three of the most considerable passages, Rom. 10:18; Acts 14:16, 17 : Rom. 2:4, pregnant with the truth we now contend for, have, I remember, been largely opened and argued by us upon the same account elsewhere. I shall, at the present, conclude the point in hand with a parcel of discourse from the writings of Mr. Calvin, who, in “An Epistle, showing how Christ is the end of the Law,” prefixed before the French New Testament, discourseth to this effect: “After that Adam was left in such confusion, he was fruitful in his cursed seed, to bring forth a generation like unto him; that is to say, vicious, perverse, corrupted, void and destitute of all good, rich and abounding in evil. Nevertheless, the Lord of his mercy, who doth not only love, but is himself love and charity, being yet willing by his infinite goodness to love that which is not worthy of love, hath not altogether dissipated, lost, and overwhelmed men, as their sin did require; hut hath sustained and supported them in sweetness and patience, giving them time and leisure to return unto him, and set themselves to that obedience from which they had strayed. And though he did dissemble and was silent, (as if he would hide himself from them,) suffering them to go after the desires and wishes of their lust, without laws, without government, without any correction by his word; yet he hath given them warnings enough, which might have incited them to seek, taste, and find him, for to know and honour him as it behoved them. For he hath lifted up every where, and in all places and things, his ensigns and arms, yea, so clearly and intelligibly emblazoned, that there was no one could pretend ignorance of the knowledge of so sovereign a Lord, who had in so ample a manner exalted his magnificence, viz. That in all parts of the world, in heaven and in earth, he hath written, and even engraven, the glory of his might, goodness, wisdom, and eternity. Saint Paul therefore saith very true, that the Lord, never left himself without witness, even towards them unto whom he hath not sent any knowledge of his word. Forasmuch as all the creatures, from the firmament to the centre of the earth, might be witnesses and messengers of his glory unto all men, to draw them to seek him, and after having found him, to welcome him, and do him homage, according to the dignity of a Lord so

good, so powerful, so wise, and eternal; and also did help each one in its place to this quest. For the birds singing, sung God; beasts cried aloud unto him, the elements stood in fear of him, mountains reasoned with him, rivers and fountains cast their eyes upon him, herbs and flowers smiled on him. Although that indeed there was no necessity to seek him very far, by reason that each one might find him in his own self, being that we are all kept up and preserved by his virtue dwelling in us. In the meanwhile, for to manifest more amply his goodness and infinite clemency among men, he hath not contented himself to instruct them all by such documents as we have expressed, but hath specially given to understand his voice to a certain people," &c. To this so large and lightsome an acknowledgment of sufficient means vouchsafed by God unto the heathen, whereby to come to the knowledge of him, of his goodness, power, &c., and consequently to repent, and believe in him, I shall not need to subjoin such sayings as these, "That the knowledge of God is naturally inbred" or implanted "in the minds of men;" "that this knowledge is stifled or corrupted, partly by their foolishness, partly by their malice;" with other passages of like import extant without number in this author.

Eighthly and lastly, If wicked men, and such who perish in their sins through impenitency and unbelief, have not sufficient power and means to repent and believe, then, when God most graciously, most affectionately, most earnestly invites them to repent and believe, and this in order to their peace and salvation, he rather insults over them in their extremity of weakness and misery, than really intends any thing gracious or of a saving import to them : But to conceive thus of God is most unworthy of him, and dishonourable to him, and not far from blasphemy: Ergo. The reason of the connexion in the major proposition is, because to profess love to a man that is in imminent danger of his life, and upon this account to persuade, press, and be earnest with him to do that for the safety of his life which the persuader in this case absolutely knoweth to be impossible for the persuaded to do, (as suppose it were to make him wings, and fly in the air beyond the seas, or to turn himself into a fish, and live in the, seas, or the like,) such an addressment as this to such a poor wretch would be basely illusory and insulting, nor could it admit of any better interpretation. In like manner, if God, knowing that a natural and ungodly man is in the utmost danger of perishing for ever, and

withal, that he hath no power to repent or believe, shall yet vehemently and affectionately urge, press, and persuade such a man to repent and believe, that he may not perish, can such an application as this bear any other construction than as derisory, and proceeding from one who doth not simply delight in the death of a sinner, but to make the death of such a miserable creature as full of gall, and bitterness, and misery as he well knows how to do? Therefore, certainly, when God "stretcheth out his hand all the day long" to wicked men,— when he saith, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: why will ye die," &c.,—when he saith, "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin,"— and again, "Turn at my reproof," with the like, he knoweth that what he thus earnestly and affectionately requireth of them, and presseth them unto, they have power to perform; otherwise, in such expressions as these, he should be like unto a judge or king, that, having sentenced a lame man to death for treason or some other crime, should promise him his life in case he would run twenty miles within an hour's space, and accordingly press him with much seriousness unto it. I have met with nothing, to my best remembrance, from the pen of any defender of the contrary faith to obstruct or check this argument in the course of it; nor am I able to imagine what can with any face of reason or of truth contest with it.

To say, that when God, with the greatest earnestness of expression, calls upon wicked men to repent, he only signifies unto them what would prevent their destruction, were it found in them, but supposeth not any principle or power in them to exhibit or perform it; such an allegation, I say, as this hath neither salt nor savour in it: for, to what account can it be brought, that God should inform wicked men how or which way they may escape destruction, if it be supposed withal that they are in no capacity, no, not so much as under a possibility of receiving any benefit by such an information? Besides God cannot truly and cordially profess that he "desireth not the death of a sinner," or "of him that dieth," upon the account only of an information directed to such a man concerning the way or means of his escape, unless it be supposed withal that he is made capable by him of benefit by such an information, and in a condition to make use of it in order to an escape. And, to conclude, mere informations are not wont to be given in exhortatory or preceptive language, as, "Turn ye, turn ye," &c., nor in such pathetic strains as "Why will ye die, O house

of Israel ?” nor with such promises annexed as “So shall not iniquity be your ruin:” nor, lastly, where they are of no use neither to those to whom they are given nor to him that giveth them, nor to any others; which, upon consideration of particulars, would plainly appear to be the case before us.

To say that in such affectionate exhortations and expressions as those under present consideration, God only expresseth his will of approbation, signifying that righteousness, and repentance after sin, and so the peace and salvation of his creature, upon and by means of these, are things simply agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, but doth not intend to signify any will or purpose in himself to work repentance in the persons to whom he thus speaketh, nor yet that they have power to repent without him, is an allegation as inconsiderable, and inconsistent with reason, as the former. For,

1. If righteousness, and repentance after sin, and the salvation of the creature hereupon, be simply agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, then why should not the repentance, and, upon this, the salvation, of those persons to whom he particularly addresseth himself in those gracious and earnest compellations and exhortations of which we now speak, be every whit as agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness as the repentance or salvation of any other persons in their case? He nowhere signifieth any difference in this kind. Or, if the repentance and salvation of some sinners be agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, and not of others, it is a plain case that the repentance and salvation of the creature, simply considered, are not the things that are so agreeable to him, but the repentance and salvation of such and such particular subjects: for repentance and salvation are the same things, and of the same nature, in what persons or subjects soever: no personal consideration whatsoever altereth their natures or essential properties.

Again,

2. If the intent of God were to express or signify his approbative will of the repentance and salvation of his creature, or the agreeableness of these to his nature, mind, and goodness, he would rather have expressed it in applications of himself unto such persons or subjects whose repentance and salvation he really intendeth and desireth, than in addressments made to those whose repentance and salvation he desireth not, nay, whom he was resolved from eternity (for this is the voice of the oracle

consulted by our adversaries) to destroy for ever. It were very improper and hard for a judge or prince to make a feeling and affectionate discourse of their clemency, goodness, and sweetness of nature, their great averseness to acts of severity, &c., unto such persons whom they had been of a long time resolved, and before any cause administered by these persons of such a resolution against them, to put to a terrible, torturing, and ignominious death, especially at or near the time when this most severe execution is intended to be done upon them.

3, and lastly, The argument propounded by us, and with whose vindication we are yet in labour, doth neither suppose that God will work repentance, as our adversaries call “working repentance,” in the persons there spoken of, *i. e.* that he will work it upon any such terms that it shall necessarily or infallibly be effected, nor yet that the persons themselves can repent without God. That which it supposeth is this, that God is so far moving and assisting the hearts, wills, and consciences of these men in order to their repentance, that, if they were but willing to do what he enableth them to do in reference and order to the same, their repentance would be effected, and they saved upon it: in which case, I mean, if they should repent, this repentance were most justly ascribable unto God, not to themselves, inasmuch as it is he that, 1. Giveth them power and abilities to repent: 2. That secretly forms and fashions their wills so as to make them willing actually to repent: 3. That supports their wills, thus framed, to and in the production of the act itself of repentance. Whereas that which men themselves do, in, towards, or about their repentance, is so inconsiderable in comparison of what God doth, that the greatness of his grace and interposure herein, deserves, in a manner, all the praise and honour that belongs unto the action: although it be true also that the person himself who repenteth, or in whom repentance is wrought, must of necessity be so far, or to such a degree, interested and active in the work, that the work itself may be as truly and properly ascribed unto him, or called his, as it is ascribed unto God, and termed his: for it is man that repenteth, not God, though what he doth in repenting he doth by the operating and assisting grace of God; in which respect it is said to be his gift. But concerning the conjuncture and respective interests of the first and second causes in the production or raising of one and the same act, we shall, God willing, discourse more particularly in the second part of this work, where also we shall clear and discharge all those passages and

texts of Scripture from their hard service, which are compelled by some to serve against this great truth, of that high importance for the glory as well of the grace as justice of God, That all men without exception have a sufficiency of power vouchsafed unto them by God whereby to repent and to believe unto salvation; and that it is through want of will, or rather willingness, not of power, that any man perisheth. At present, to the further confirmation of the main doctrine commended in this discourse, we argue thus,

In the eleventh place: “ If God intended not the death of Christ as a ransom or satisfaction for all men, then are there some men whom he never intended to save, but to leave irrecoverably to everlasting destruction and perdition.” This proposition, I suppose, stands firm and strong upon its own basis, and needs no prop of proof or argument to support it. For, God intending to save no man but by the death of Christ, evident it is, that if, there be any man or number of men for whose salvation he did not intend this death, that he never intended their salvation. Therefore I assume: "But there are no such men or number of men whose salvation God never intended, or whom he intended to leave irrecoverably to everlasting perdition. Ergo." The reason of this proposition is, partly because whatsoever God at any time intends he intended always, yea, from eternity: partly also because there was a time when all men were righteous and holy, viz. during the whole time of Adam's integrity, in whose loins all men then were, and so must needs be partakers of the same holiness and integrity with him. So that unless we shall say and hold that God never intended the salvation of just and holy men, hut to leave them irrecoverably to everlasting perdition, we cannot say that there are or were any men, or any number of men, whose salvation he never intended, or whom he intended to leave irrecoverably to everlasting destruction. Yea, all men had a being in God himself before they received or had a being in Adam, in which respect Adam himself is called "the son of God," Luke 4:38; viz. because he received his being from him, as (though not after the manner that) children receive their beings from their parents or fathers. Now, wheresoever, or in what estate or condition soever, Adam was, there were all men in the same estate and condition with him. So, then, all men considered as being in God, were nothing but God himself, according to the common and most true maxim of divines: "Quicquid in Deo est, est Deus;" whatsoever is in God, is God.

The truth of this maxim was clearly evinced by us. Chap. 4. of this discourse, where we argued the absolute simplicity of the Divine Essence, or God. Therefore, if God purposed from eternity to leave any man or number of men irrecoverably to eternal destruction, this purpose was conceived or taken up by him against these men whilst they were yet only in his will and power, and consequently, whilst they were nothing but himself. But that God should peremptorily resolve and decree never to save, nor to intend to save, but to design and consign over irrevocably, irreversibly, irrecoverably, to eternal misery and destruction millions of men whilst they were yet perfectly righteous and holy, yea, whilst they were yet nothing but himself, is, doubtless, a notion hardly incident to the judgment or thoughts of any man who trembles to think irreverently or unworthily of God.

It is like it will be here pleaded, that God, in his purpose or decree to leave the men we speak of to everlasting perdition, doth not look upon them, or consider them, as being in himself, nor yet as being righteous and holy in Adam, but as men that would in time prove corrupt, sinful, and abominable; and for God to decree to leave men thus considered to irrecoverable destruction, is no ways unworthy of him. I answer,

1. If God, in his decree of reprobation, considered men as sinful and wicked, then he passed over, and took no knowledge or notice of them, whilst they were yet righteous and innocent; or if he did take knowledge of their righteousness, yet, this notwithstanding, and, as it were, with the neglect and contempt of it, he passed that most dreadful doom or decree of an eternal reprobation against them. "Whereas the Scriptures everywhere commend and highly magnify the constant love, care, and respects of God towards the righteous: "The righteous Lord," saith David, "loveth righteousness, and his countenance doth behold the upright," Psa. 11:7. And again: "For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield," Psa. 5:12. So again:

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous," Psa. 34:15; (to omit many other places of like assertion.) From whence it evidently appears, 1, That God beholds and sees, and cannot but behold and see, those that are righteous; 2, that seeing and beholding them such, he always loves them, and delights in them. Therefore it is impossible that God at any time should not see and behold the persons we speak of, being righteous, and whilst righteous; and 2, that, seeing and beholding them such, he should



not love them, and intend graciously to them; and consequently, that all this while he should intend or decree the extremity of all evil and misery against them.

2. It is altogether inconsistent with the righteousness and equity of God's proceedings, to neglect or pass by the present condition or ways of men, either of righteousness or unrighteousness, and to respect them, or measure out unto them, either grace or displeasure, either reward or punishment, according to their future condition, or according to what he foresees their ways will be afterward. All God's purposes and decrees relate unto men according to the nature and exigency of their present conditions, not of their future. If a man be at present in a condition of righteousness, he is under the gracious influence and benediction of that decree of God, whereby he hath decreed life, and peace, and blessedness to righteous men. And suppose it be known unto God that this man, righteous at present, will afterwards forsake his righteousness, and turn aside into ways of unrighteousness, yet whilst he remaineth righteous he is not under the dint or danger of that decree of God which respects unrighteous men, and whereby wrath and judgment are decreed against them. That disposition or principle which we now ascribe unto God is most clearly asserted in the Scriptures by himself, and that by way of vindication of his righteousness from the unworthy conceits of those who judged otherwise of him: "If a man *be just*, and *do* that which is lawful and right; and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel," &c., "he is just; he shall surely live, saith the Lord God," Ezek. 18:5, 6, 9: *q. d.* During this posture, or course of righteous walking, he is under the blessing of that gracious and unchangeable decree of mine, wherein life and peace are decreed unto righteous men. "But when the righteous *turneth* away from his righteousness, and *committeth* iniquity, and *doeth* according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die," ver. 24, *i. e.* perish for ever, viz. unless he repents, and turns back again to his former course of righteousness. So again: "Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he

turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity,” as many being in an estate of grace, upon a presumption that they cannot possibly fall away, too frequently do, “all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live; he shall not die,” Ezek. 33:12—15. By these, and very many more places of like consideration, in reference to the business in hand, which might be added, it is fully evident, that particular men, or the persons of men, from time to time, come under the eternal decrees of God, either of life or death, of salvation or condemnation, not according to the nature, exigency, or import of their potential or future, but of their actual and present conditions respectively; and consequently, that if the generality of men were either from eternity righteous, (and righteous they must needs be whilst they were in God, and in him only, and were nothing but God,), or at any time after their creation, as they were in Adam during the time of his innocency, they must needs, whilst they were in these capacities or conditions, be under that eternal decree of God, by which or wherein life, and peace, and happiness are decreed unto righteous men, and so could not be from eternity under a decree of reprobation.

3, and lastly, If God from eternity looked upon the far greater part of men (all those I mean who are reprobates, so called) as persons that would in time prove sinful, or as persons in time proved sinful, and, under this prospect of them, passed a decree of reprobation upon or against them, then was this sinfulness wherein he beheld them the ground or cause of this decree of reprobation, or not. If not, to what purpose is it pleaded or stood upon in reference to the said decree? And why is it not plainly and right down affirmed that God reprobated them out of his mere will and pleasure, without the interveniency of any consideration of sin, to incline or move him thereunto? And if this be so, he need not in his decree of reprobation look upon them as sinful, but simply as men. If he looked upon them simply as men, then he looked upon them as the pure and perfect workmanship of his own hands; if so,

then the perfect workmanship of his own hands must be the object of his reprobation, and consequently that which is good: "For God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good," Gen. 1:31. But impossible it is that that which is good, especially "very good," should be the object of God's reprobation. Again, if that sinfulness, wherein it is pretended that God looked upon men when he reprobated them, was any ground or cause of such his reprobation, then was it a ground or cause morally moving him hereunto, for other influence or efficiency upon him it could have none. If so, then, 1. The will of God may have a cause superior to it, and productive of it; which is generally taken for an impossibility. 2. If the sinfulness of men foreseen moved God morally to conceive or make a decree of reprobation against them, then was this decree made by him in a way of justice and equity; yea, upon such terms that, had he not made or passed such a decree upon the grounds and reasons that were before him, he had been unjust. If so, there being the same reason why he should pass a like decree against those men also who are now called his elect, inasmuch as a like sinfulness in them was foreseen likewise by him from eternity, he must be unjust, because he hath not passed a like decree against these. The truth is, that such a decree of reprobation as men commonly notion in God, involves so many inextricable difficulties, palpable absurdities, (that I say not intolerable blasphemies also,) that my hope is it will shortly, mole mali sui ruere, fall and sink with the insupportable weight of its own evil in the minds and judgments of men. As for those places of Scripture, with the arguments commonly drawn from them, which are counted the pillars of such a reprobation, we shall in due time, the inflexible hand of death, or some other grand diversion, not preventing us, by the gracious assistance of the Spirit of truth, clearly answer, and disengage from that service. In the mean time we shall farther countenance the doctrine in hand with this demonstration :

"If Christ died not for all men without exception, then is the sin of Adam more extensive, or extensive unto more, in a way of condemnation and death, than the death of Christ, and the grace given by him unto the world, is in a way of justification and of life." The reason of this consequence is apparent, viz. because the sin of Adam extended unto all men, without exception, in a way of condemnation. Therefore I assume: "But the sin of Adam is not extensive unto more in a way of

condemnation, than the grace given by Christ is in a way of justification. Ergo.”

This latter proposition is clearly enough asserted by the apostle, and this over and over: “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift,” (*i. e.* the free gift of grace by Christ unto the world;) meaning that the offence or sin of Adam did not operate so forcibly, or with so high a hand, towards or to the condemnation of men, as the grace given by Christ operateth towards or to the justification or salvation of men. For thus he explains himself in the words following : “For if through the offence of one many be dead,” *i. e.* obnoxious or liable unto death, “much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many,” Rom. 5:15. As if he should have said, There is great reason to conceive and judge that the grace of God, and the gift of Jesus Christ thereby, should be much more effectual to procure the justification and salvation of many, than the offence of one the condemnation of many; partly, because the offence of one wrought only in its own strength and native tendency in bringing condemnation and death upon many, having only the permissive will of God, not his operative or designing will, for or towards the production of such an effect; whereas the operative and projecting, or designing, will of God, interposed, went along with, yea, and magnified itself in the gracious gift by Jesus Christ, in order to the bringing of the justification of life upon or unto many; partly also, because Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, consecrated and given by the Father for this end and purpose, viz. to bring the justification of life unto or upon many, (*i.e.* to put many into such an estate of justification, wherein continuing they should live or be saved,) was a far more likely person to carry on and make good his engagement for the justification of many, than Adam, being a weak creature, and of an earthy frame, was to bring the condemnation of death upon many. Now to say, that “by the offence of one,” a far greater number of men, incomparably more, are “made dead,” (brought into an estate of condemnation and death,) than by the grace of God, and by the gift of Jesus Christ through this grace, are brought into an estate of justification, is quite to alter the property of the apostle’s arguing in this place, and to invert the express tendency of it. For whereas his intent clearly is to assert a far more emphatical likelihood or rationality, that the grace of God in the gift of Jesus Christ should operate and prevail to the

justification of many, and that accordingly it doth thus operate and prevail, than the sin of Adam to the condemnation of many ; such an assertion as that mentioned makes him to say, or at least itself saith, that whether there be more likelihood or rationality, or no, that the grace of God by Christ should justify many, than that the sin of Adam should condemn many, yet for matter of fact it is otherwise; and that the grace of God by Christ justifies a few only in comparison, whereas the sin of Adam condemns all without exception. To affirm, for the strengthening of the faith of believers, (upon which account, questionless, the apostle here speaketh it,) that there is a far greater probability that many should be justified by Christ than that many should be condemned by Adam, and yet to affirm withal that, this probability notwithstanding, many, yea, all without exception, are condemned by Adam, and but a very few, comparatively, justified by Christ, is to blow hot and cold with the same breath, and to pull down with the one hand what a man builds up with the other.

The commensurableness or coextensiveness of the grace of God in Christ, in order to the justification of men, with the sin of Adam in respect of the condemnation of men, is very pregnantly avouched, the second and third time also, by the same apostle, in these subsequent passages of the same contexture: “Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,” Rom. 5:18, 19. In these two verses, the condemned ones of Adam, and the justified ones of Christ, are, as we formerly observed, computed by one and the same numerical expression. In the former, we hear of the condemnation of no more than *all men* by the offence of Adam, and of no fewer than all men justified by Christ; in the latter, of no more than *many* made sinners by Adam, nor of any fewer than *many* made righteous by Christ. Now as Peter was admonished by a voice from heaven “not to call that common which God had cleansed,” Acts. 10:15; so neither is it safe for any man to mate that number lesser which God hath made greater, nor to assert a signal disproportion between two numbers which God hath computed and drawn up to a perfect equality.

How uncouth and broadly incongruous and irrational their

interpretations are, who carry the sense of these passages another way, and make the *all men* of Christ no men at all, in comparison of the *all men* of Adam, and the *many* of Christ few, in comparison of the *many* of Adam, hath been demonstratively argued in the sixth chapter of this Discourse, where likewise the expositions of Mr. Calvin, Bucer, and other orthodox expositors upon the said places, were produced in full accord with the sense and interpretations now awarded by us.

Only one thing we shall briefly add in this place. Whereas the apostle, in the latter of the two last recited passages, expresseth the guilt contracted by men from Adam, in a verb signifying the time past, *αμαρτωλοί κατεστάησαν*, *have been* made sinners and the righteousness or justification brought unto men by Christ, in a verb of the future tense, *δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται*, *shall be* made righteous, which to some may seem to import, that the apostle intends to make the justified ones of Christ in this place, no more than those who *shall be* actually justified and saved in the end, the number of which cannot be equal to those made sinners by Adam; I answer, 1. That the justification accruing unto the world by Christ, is a little before expressed in a verb signifying the time past also, viz. where he saith, as we lately heard, that “ the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, *εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς* *Ἰνερίσσειεν*, *hath* abounded unto many,” Rom. 5:15. Therefore the collection specified, as issuing from the latter expression mentioned, is illegitimate and groundless. 2. Tremellius from the Syriac, translates the said latter expression in the present tense; Multi justī fiunt, many *are* made righteous; which notes only the nature of the gracious transaction of Christ, which is, to make many righteous, not the event. 3. There is scarce any thing of a more common and known observation about the Scriptures than the mutual enallage or change of tenses, the present being sometimes put for the preter, and sometimes for the future; and so these reciprocally. So that unless either the scope of the place, or exigency of the sentence, will enforce it otherwise, there is no building any observation of weight upon the particularity of a tense. Now the scope of the place in hand is so far from enforcing any such supposition as this, that the justified ones of Christ, spoken of in this chapter, are only those who shall be saved at last, that it enforceth the quite contrary, as hath been shown. And for the sentence, it requireth no such supposal upon any account whatsoever. But 4, and lastly, The reason, I conceive, why the

apostle varieth his expression about the justification brought unto the world by Christ, mentioning it, in the latter place, in a verb of the future tense, whereas he had in the same period expressed the guilt brought upon the world by Adam, in a verb of the preter tense ; the reason, I say, hereof, I conceive to be, because it is more easily and more generally believed that guilt is come upon the world by Adam, than that justification is come unto it by Christ. In which respect he mentioneth the former as a thing done, and generally so known and confessed to be ; the latter, because more questioned and less believed, he asserteth more vigorously and commandingly ; the future tense being frequently in Scripture, as in other writings also, employed to carry strong assertions and strict commands. So that this period of the apostle, “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,” may be paraphrased thus: As you easily believe, and take it for granted, that by the disobedience of one many have been made sinners, and so guilty of and liable unto death, *i. e.* that all men, as they come respectively to be conceived and born, were made liable unto death by the disobedience of one long since acted, and should have perished for ever should not grace have prevented it, so certainly will it appear and be found true, in due time, that many, even as many, yea, the self-same, both number and persons, in their successive conceptions also and comings into the world, those already born, and those that hereafter shall be born, have been and shall be “made righteous,” *i. e.* have been and shall be delivered from the guilt of sin and liableness unto death, “by the obedience of one, *i. e.* by the obedient and submissive deportment of Jesus Christ towards his Father, in yielding of himself up unto death. In what sense men may be, and are by the apostle said to be, “by nature children of wrath,” Eph. 2:3, and yet not liable unto condemnation, either in their respective conceptions or births, shall, God assisting, be argued and cleared in more convenient place. Only at present, to stay stomachs, we say, 1. That the word “nature” doth nowhere signify either the natural conception or the natural birth, nor always, if anywhere, partnership or communion in the human nature, or a descent from Adam in the ordinary way of propagation, but sometimes an innate or inbred principle in a man, one or more, as 1 Cor. 11:14, Rom. 2:14, &c.: sometimes also a course or series of actions whereunto a man falleth and addicteth himself of his own accord, without any compulsion or

necessitation either from within or from without, through inconsiderateness or the like; and so likewise the habit or evil propension voluntarily contracted by such actions. And in this sense it may well be taken by the apostle in the clause specified, the carriage of the former part of the verse inviting unto it. So that men may be said to be “by nature children of wrath,” when they voluntarily follow or suffer themselves to be led by such sinful inclinations, which are apt to breed or be engendered in flesh and blood, or in the “natures” of men. 2, “By nature,” cannot signify, by natural birth, nor by communion in the human nature, nor by descent from Adam, or the like; because then it would follow, that all children whatsoever, dying infants, or children, should perish everlastingly; at least if by “children of wrath” be meant in an estate of condemnation or under the actual displeasure of God; because all partake alike of the natural birth, of the nature of man, are of a like descent from Adam, &c. 3. Some ancient expositors interpreted the word *φύση*, “by nature,” prorsus, *i. e.* utterly, or altogether. Theophylact and (Ecumenius, *γνησίως*, vere, seu germane, *i. e.* truly, or indeed. 4. Chrysostom’s interpretation of the place is of much affinity with that first mentioned. The apostle, saith he, “saith, we have provoked God, and made him wroth, that is, we were wrath, and nothing else. For as he that is the child of a man, is by nature a man, even so we also were children of wrath even as others; that is, none was free, but we all did things deserving wrath.” 5, and lastly, By “children of wrath,” the apostle may very probably mean persons that had been lost, and were worthy wrath, or deserving death. And thus Calvin interprets. “By children of wrath,” saith he “understand simply such as were lost, and worthy of eternal death.” According to the import of this interpretation of the phrase, “children of wrath,” all men may truly be said to be “by nature,” *i. e.* by natural propagation, or by their descent from Adam, “children of wrath,” and yet be born in an estate of justification, or in an actual and immediate capacity of salvation by Christ. As it is with those, who have arrived at years of discretion, and actually believe: they carry original defilement still about them; they were, in respect of what was derived unto them from Adam in their natural conception and birth, wholly lost, and are still, notwithstanding their faith, in the rigour and strictness of justice, worthy of eternal death; and yet, by means of their faith and the gracious compact and covenant which God hath made with those that believe, they are not in an estate of



condemnation, or liable to eternal death. In like manner children may possibly be conceived, and so born into the world, with original sin, and yet not with or under the guilt of it: this may be dissolved and taken away by the superabounding grace of God vouchsafed unto the world by Jesus Christ, though the sin itself remaineth. So again, children, as soon as conceived or born, may be, and are, in strictness of account, worthy of eternal death by reason of that communion they had in Adam's sin, being in his loins when he sinned; and yet this worthiness may not be imputed unto them, or charged upon them, being, as we suppose it clear from the Scriptures, expiated or atoned by the great sacrifice of Christ in his death. This interpretation of the apostle's saying, "We were by nature children of wrath even as others," is, 1 conceive, of all the rest, least liable to any material exception. But we have gone beyond the line of our late intentions in following this chase: we retire, with a purpose to conclude this chapter, with the addition only of one argument more for the confirmation of our main doctrine. Therefore,

In the thirteenth and last place, The universality of redemption purchased by Christ I further argue and demonstrate from the consideration of some of the principal types under the law, by which the compass and unlimited extent of it were prefigured. I shall insist only upon two: the brazen serpent, and the feast of jubilee.

First, concerning the brazen serpent: Our Saviour himself owneth and asserteth a typical correspondency in the erection and usefulness hereof with himself in respect of that great and gracious design and purpose of God in sending him into the world: "And as Moses," saith he, "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:14, 15. A type being a kind of similitude, and the property or condition of this not being, in the proverbial expression, "to run on all-fours," *i. e.* to answer or hold proportion in all particulars, indeed, many times not in more than one only, therefore our Saviour, to prevent all misunderstanding in the interpretation or application of the type mentioned, particulariseth that very respect or consideration in himself, and his sending into the world, which was prefigured and expressed in the type alleged by him, in these words, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, &c," To understand clearly what there was in the type answering, in a way prefiguration, that consideration in Christ's coming

or sending into the world, which himself here insists upon as presignified hereby, we must have recourse to the history concerning the erection of the brazen serpent, unto which also himself sendeth us in that particle of comparison or resemblance, “as;” “As Moses lifted up,” &c. The original of this brazen serpent, together with the counsel and intention of God in his erection, Moses recordeth thus: “Make thee,” saith he to Moses, “a fiery serpent,” viz. in similitude or form, “and set it upon a pole ; and it shall come to pass that *every one that is bitten*, when he looketh upon it, shall live,” Num. 21:8; from which words it is most evident, that this “fiery serpent” (in form as Christ came “in the similitude of” that “sinful flesh,” whose sting is so mortal to the world) was not intended by God as a means of healing or preservation to a certain, definite, or determinate number of persons, or that such and such by name, and no other, should look upon it in order to their healing, or that whosoever in the event did look upon it, and no other but these, should be healed by it; but that whosoever would, might look upon it, (for which end also Moses was commanded to set it up on high upon “a pole,” where it might be readily visible unto all,) and that whosoever should or did look upon it, being bitten or stung with any “fiery serpent,” might be healed thereby. Now, all men without exception being, as we all know and confess, stung, and that mortally, with the “fiery serpent” sin, unless Christ should be lifted up, upon the cross, *i.e.* suffer death, with an intent on God’s part, 1. That every man, if he pleased, might believe in him; and, 2. That every man that should believe in him should be saved by him; he should altogether disanswer that famous type we speak of, and that in that very consideration and respect wherein he pleads a special conformity to it.

If it be replied, The correspondency between Christ and the brazen serpent is sufficiently salved in this, That as the will and ordinance of God in and about the brazen serpent was that whosoever, being stung, should look up to it, should be healed; so is it his good pleasure in and about Christ, that whosoever believeth in him should be saved from that death which sin exposeth him unto. But this doth not imply or suppose Christ to be an universal Saviour or Redeemer. I answer,

1. That the brazen serpent was not ordained by God to be a condition or means of healing, by a looking up to it, only unto those, or for their sakes, who actually did look up to it and were healed by it, (unless we shall suppose that all those, without exception, who were stung of serpents, did

look up to it, and were accordingly healed, which would be a supposition without sufficient ground,) but unto all those, without exception, and for their sakes, who were, or any time after should be, thus stung, whether they would or should look up to it for healing or no. Nor do we find in the words of the institution of it, lately specified, the least whisper or intimation of any exception of persons in this kind. Therefore, unless it be admitted that Christ died as well for those, or for their sakes, who, being sinners, as all are, do not or shall not believe in him, as for those who do or shall, he will not fulfil the type we speak of, no, not in that consideration wherein the richness and fulness of his grace was in special manner typified, as himself, in the words lately transcribed from his own mouth, plainly enough declareth.

2. If it be granted, that this is the will or intent of God, that whosoever believeth or shall believe in him, shall he saved, it amounts to as much in expressness of consequence and import as we contended for; viz. that there is salvation purchased and procured by him for all men without exception. For that which is to be had upon the performance of such a condition, which, being performed, gives no being to it, must of necessity have a being there, where or from whence it is to be had upon the performance of this condition, whether this condition be performed or no. If it be true, that in case I shall go up into the chamber, I shall meet my friend or brother there, it must needs be true that my friend or brother is there, whether I go up to meet him there or no. In like manner, if this be a truth, that in case I shall believe on Christ, I shall find salvation for myself in him, it must of necessity be every whit as true that there is salvation in him for me, whether I believe in him or no: because my believing in him would not create any salvation in him more than what was in him before. So that if it were not in him before my believing, I could not have it, I should not find it in him, though I should believe. But the legitimacy of the consequence we speak of, from the premises unto which we relate it, and which are our adversaries' own resolute doctrine, we have argued and evicted at large, and this more than once, in our former discussions.

Again, The other great type we mentioned, of the redemption purchased by Christ for the world, the feast of jubilee, plainly proveth this redemption to have been, in the purchase and procurement of it, general or universal, however, in the actual possession or enjoyment of it, it

proves the benefit or blessing only of a few, by means of the non-acceptation of it by the greatest part of those for whom it was purchased. That the feast of jubilee under the law was a type, and that of a most clear and significant import, of the spiritual liberty and freedom from sin and misery, purchased by Christ, and proclaimed by God in the gospel unto the world, is the standing notion and sense of all parties in the present controversies. The tenor of the institution of this feast, as far as concerns the business in hand, runneth thus. "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto *all* the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return *every man* unto his possession, and ye shall return *every man* unto his family," Lev. 25:10. And a little after: "In the year of this jubilee ye shall return *every man* unto his possession, ver. 13. "This returning of every man to his possession is, saith Mr. Ainsworth, "a figure of our restoring by Christ into paradise, the possession whereof Adam lost by sin." And, by proportion, the returning of every man to his family, (*i. e.* to his civil liberty and freedom,) is a figure of our restoring by Christ unto that spiritual liberty, or freedom from under the dominion and power of sin, with all the hard consequences of such a bondage, whereof we were all deprived by Adam's sin. Now the tenor of the counsel and intentions of God, in the erection or institution of this feast, we see expressly to be, the ease, benefit, restitution to possessions and liberties of *every man*, without the exception of any. Yea, all servants that had refused their liberty at the end of the seventh year of their service, which their masters were expressly enjoined by the law, Exod. 21:6, to grant unto them, if they desired it, had the benefit and indulgence of the jubilee, and were then to be manumitted or set at liberty, if they desired it, as well as others; which plainly signified the riches of the grace of God in the gospel to be so great, that even wilful sinners, and such as have waxen old in ways of provocation, are hereby made capable of the love and favour of God in the pardon of all their sins. For, to note this by the way, the intent of this feast was not, I suppose, to compel, or necessitate every man, no, nor yet any man, to return either to his possession, or to his family, whether they would or no, but to afford them an opportunity, and to invest them with a liberty, or right of returning unto either, if they pleased. Because otherwise, it had been less matter of gratification, ease, or indulgence unto men, yea, possibly unto some, as viz. unto those, who had been

found unwilling to return unto either, it had been matter of trouble and discontent, nsv γάρ ἀναγκάϊον νραγμ\* ἀνιάρὸν ἱφν, (as the Greek epigram hath it) *i. e.*

**Whatever necessity imposeth,  
The mind necessitated troubleth.**

But to the point in hand. It being the clear and unquestionable intent of God, in and by the great and solemn feast of jubilee, to loose the two sore yokes of bondage and poverty from off all necks whatsoever, without any difference or distinction of persons, in one kind or other, he should be far more gracious and munificent in type or shadow, than in substance, in case he should not be every whit as large, free, and comprehensive in his intentions of affording means and opportunity unto men for deliverance from sin and death by Jesus Christ.

If it be objected; It is true, the intent of the jubilee was to invest every man (viz. that was a Jew, and of the natural seed of Abraham) with a right of power to return to his possession or family; but not to gratify every man simply, or to indulge the like privilege unto all the world. Therefore this rather proves the confinement of the intentions of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, unto his church or elect only, than the enlargement of them unto all the world; especially considering that the whole body of the people and nation of the Jews, were typical, and presignified the church or churches, which were afterwards to be raised up amongst the Gentiles. To this I answer,

1. Be it granted, that the body or nation of the Jews did typify the church or churches of the Gentiles, yet did not every single person of this nation typify a true member of these churches.

As, for example, Ahitophel did not typify a true saint, or a believer under the gospel, nor did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram typify so many godly or holy men among the Gentiles; nor had any unrighteous or wicked person of this nation the honour of typing out any true Nathaniel, or elect person, under the New Testament. If ungodly persons among the Jews were types of any thing, it was of such hypocrites or profane persons that should be found in the churches under the gospel. And if so, the intent of the jubilee being, as we have proved from the express letter of the institution of it, for the benefit, comfort, and ease of every man amongst

them, as well of the wicked and unholy, as of the holy and righteous, it follows roundly, that this typified and taught, that the intentions of God, in and about the salvation afforded and exhibited by Jesus Christ unto the world, stood equal and indifferent towards all men without exception, without any distinction of holy and unholy, righteous and unrighteous, elect and reprobate, or the like.

2. Although the law of jubilee, as the whole ceremonial law, in all the parts and branches of it, was given particularly *unto* the Jews, yet was it not given particularly *for* the Jews, *i. e.* for the sake or benefit of the Jews only, but for the accommodation and benefit of all the world besides. And upon this account, I suppose, the apostle Paul calleth the ceremonial injunctions by Moses, the elements, or rudiments, not of the Jews, but of the world, Col. 2:8—20; viz. because they were given with an intent, on God's part, to nurture and breed up the world, *i. e.* all nations as well as the Jews, in such a measure or degree of the knowledge of the Messiah, then to come, which he judged meet to impart unto the world until his coming. So that howsoever the Jewish nation was honoured by God above all other nations, in being made by him feoffees in trust, as it were, for the world, and had the keeping of the oracles of life committed unto them, yet had they no right or lawfulness of power, to deny any person under heaven part or fellowship with them, in any of their spiritual privileges, who should desire it of them in a due and regular way, and turn proselyte. Now there was no person of any nation, that was made by God incapable of the benefit or blessing of proselytism; and, consequently, the joy and privileges accruing unto men, by virtue of the law and feast of jubilee, did, though not in so immediate and direct a way, concern all other nations and persons as well as the Jews, or natural seed of Abraham. Even as the gospel and sacramental administrations annexed thereunto, in these days, are only possessed and enjoyed in and by the churches of Christ: but yet they are so, and upon such terms possessed and enjoyed by them, that whosoever from amongst the most idolatrous and heathenish nation under heaven shall believe, may and ought to have communion with them in such their possessions and enjoyments. Either of these answers is sufficient to loosen the joints of the loins of the objection.

The arguments and grounds laid down and managed in this chapter, together with those passages and texts of Scripture which we have heard

speaking so distinctly and aloud the same things with them, have turned my thoughts and judgment about the intentions of God in the death of Christ upside down, and have filled me, mind, heart, soul, and conscience with this belief, that these intentions of his stand, and always stood, equally, impartially and uniformly bent for or towards the salvation of the world without any difference or variation in respect of any man, or numbers of men, considered simply as men, or as having done neither good nor evil. Yet are there three things more that have made my belief in this kind, measure heaped up, pressed down, and running over. The first is, that conjunctio magna, that great conjunction of all, or far the greatest part of the chief luminaries in the firmament of the Christian church, whilst the constitution of it was yet more athletic, healthful, and sound, I mean during the primitive times, the multiplied rays or beams of whose light centred in the same point of doctrine with us. Of this we shall, God assisting, give some competent account in the forepart of the chapter following. The second is, the frequent testimony given to this doctrine by those who are, or at least are so esteemed, the chief adversaries and opposers of it, who, as appears from their writings, are oft necessitated to assert or own it as a principle, without which they know not in many cases', how to make a consistent discourse, or manage the theme they have before them. Somewhat of this also we shall show in the latter part of the said chapter. The third, and last is the apparent inconcludency and weakness of those arguings and reasonings, whether from the Scriptures or other principles, by which the cause of the contrary opinion is wont by the ablest patrons it hath, as far as men of this engagement are yet known unto me, to be pleaded and maintained. The demonstration of this is designed for the subject matter of the second part of this work, if God shall vouchsafe to make his sun to shine a birthday for it.

## CHAPTER 19.

**Wherein the sense of antiquity, together with the variableness of judgment in modern writers, touching the controversy under discussion, is truly and impartially represented.**

FOR their sakes who are afraid to believe any thing, what pregnancy of ground soever there be to evince the truth of it otherwise, but only what they know, or at least think, that many other men, and these someways honourable in their sight, have believed before them, I have subjoined this chapter to those large debates which finished their course in the preceding chapters of this book, managed, I trust, to the satisfaction of all such who count it more safe to stand upon a rock alone, or with a few, than upon a quagmire or quicksand with a greater company. But because all men have not this faith, I shall show unto those that want it a cloud of as honourable persons, I suppose, even in their own eyes, as any that have inhabited mortality since the apostles' days, standing upon the rock of that doctrine which hath been asserted and recommended in our former discussions. For who within that compass of time we speak of have had a spirit of greater glory resting on them than those that sat in the apostles' chairs next after them, and were pillars of light and fire in the Christian church in her primitive and purest days ? And that these in their respective stations and successive generations were not only partakers, but defenders and assertors of the same faith with us in the doctrine of redemption hitherto maintained, is legible enough in the next ensuing testimonies ; after which we shall show how fluctuating and inconsistent with themselves the judgments of later writers have been about the said doctrine, and how impossible it is for any man to be of an established conscience therein, that shall build himself upon their authority.

We shall begin with Augustin, the first-born amongst the fathers, though not in time, yet in worth and name; and from him proceed first unto those that lived before him, by a gradual ascent; and then to those that succeeded him, by a descent answerable. That Austin's doctrine concerning the intentions of God about the extent of the death of Christ, was the same with that asserted by us for orthodox and sound in our



present discourse, needeth, I suppose, no greater proof than an impartial and due consideration of these and such like sayings, scattered up and down in his writings from place to place upon occasion. In that discourse wherein he makes answer, *ad articulos sibi falso impositos*, to certain articles falsely fathered upon him, he insisteth upon this, in the first place, as laid to his charge, that he should hold, "That our Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for the redemption of all men." The second he mentioneth is this: "That God should not be willing to save all men, though all men were willing to be saved." In purging himself upon the former of these, he writeth thus: " Against the wound of original sin, wherewith in Adam the nature of all men was corrupted and become dead, and from whence the disease of all manner of concupiscence groweth, the death of the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ is a true, potent, and the singular remedy, who being not liable to the debt of death, and the only person without sin, died for those that were sinners and debtors" in this kind. "Therefore as to the greatness and potency of the price, and as far as concerns one" and the same "cause of mankind, the blood of Christ is the *redemption of the whole world*. But they who pass through this world without the faith of Christ, and the sacrament" or sacred work "of regeneration, are strangers to" or estranged from "this redemption. Therefore, whereas by reason of one and the same "nature of all men and, by" one and the same "cause of all men truly undertaken by our Lord, all men may truly be said to be redeemed, yet all men are not" actually "brought" or delivered "out of captivity. The propriety," *i. e.* the actual possession and enjoyment "of redemption, is, doubtless, with them, out of whom the prince of this world is cast forth, and who are now not vessels of the devil, but members of Christ: whose death is not so bestowed upon mankind, that they who never come to be regenerate, should belong to the redemption thereof," *i. e.* should actually partake of this redemption, "but so that what by one only example" or exemplary act "was done for all men together," or at once, "might be celebrated in all particular persons, by a particular sacrament:" *i. e.* might by a particular administration of the sacrament of this redemption, meaning, I suppose, baptism, to each particular man, be plainly declared to relate unto, or to concern all particulars. "For that cup" or potion "of immortality, which was tempered and made of our infirmity, and the divine power" or virtue "hath in it wherewith to profit all men; but it profiteth no man unless he

drinketh it." What testimony from a man concerning his judgment in any point, can be imagined more pregnant, satisfactory and clear, than such wherein he expressly complains of being falsely charged with the contrary, and vindicates and explains himself accordingly? Beza, because of this testimony, so full and particular against his opinion of limited redemption, and being loath to have this his opinion encumbered with the opposite authority of this father, dischargeth it of the burden, by pretending that the book, or tract, wherein it standeth is supposititious, and not Augustin's. But besides the genius, phrase, and style, every ways *ὁμοιάζοντα*, resembling the author, whose name it beareth, Calvin, who of the two was a man of greater discerning abilities, acknowledgeth it accordingly. Nor is there any piece in all those writings, which pass under the name of Augustin's works at this day, but may, upon a pretence every whit as plausible, be traduced as illegitimate.

Before I pass from this testimony, I desire the reader to take knowledge that the worthy author thereof, towards the beginning of the said tract, and a few lines before the recited testimony, professeth, that what he should deliver therein, was his sense and judgment in the respective articles, in opposition to the Pelagians and their doctrine. From whence it manifestly appeareth, that in Augustin's days, it was no orthodox doctrine, but a Pelagian error, to hold that Christ died not for all men; inasmuch as the father complaineth (as we heard before) that he was falsely charged by some abettors of the Pelagian faction that he held, that Christ the Lord suffered not for the redemption of all men. Therefore they who traduce the doctrine maintained in this discourse, under the odious name of Pelagianism, either declare themselves notably ignorant of what Pelagianism meaneth, or else asperse that father, who, questionless, knew better than all his fellows what belonged to Pelagianism, with the blot of this ignorance. By his vote and verdict, the doctrine which contradicteth that asserted by us, is Pelagianism.

Another testimony from the same father, upon the same account, may be that formerly cited. Having rehearsed these words, "For God sent not his Son to judge the world, but that the world through him should be saved he infers thus: "Therefore as much as lieth in the physician, he came to heal the sick. That man slayeth himself, who will not observe the precepts of the physician. He came a Saviour unto the world. Why is he called the Saviour of the world, but *that he should save the world.*"

Elsewhere, addressing himself in his private devotions unto the Lord Christ, he speaketh to him thus: "I know thee to be true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Creator, Saviour, and Redeemer of me, and *of whole mankind.*" Again: "O thou unclean world, he cometh that should redeem thee, and thou art troubled: and him thou wilt destroy, when he was  *minded to deliver thee.*" Concerning Judas he demandeth, "What did the sin of Judas, who sold him, by whom  *he should have been*" or, was to have been "*redeemed?*" Afterwards he presenteth Christ, after his resurrection, speaking to the unbelieving Jews, who had crucified him, thus: "Behold the man whom ye have crucified; behold that God and man, in whom you refuse to believe. You see the wounds which you have inflicted, the side which ye have pierced: because by you, *and for you,* it hath been opened, and yet you will not enter." In another place, thus: "Mankind falleth sick, not of bodily diseases, but of sins. This great patient" or sick man "lieth all along the world, from the east unto the west. *For the healing of this great sick man, the omnipotent physician comes down.*" The same father (in another part of his works, comparing the first and the second Adam together) discourseth to this effect. "What therefore was justly due from Adam, Christ unjustly by suffering death, paid. He stretched forth his hand to the sweetness of the apple: Christ to the bitterness of the cross. He showed the tree of death; Christ the tree of life. He lift up himself against God and fell; Christ  *humbled himself that he might lift up all.* Adam brought death upon all men universally; and Christ hath repaired" or, restored "life unto all men. Every one therefore looked towards the brazen serpent and was healed" of the wounds received "from the poisonous serpents. The brazen serpent set upon a wooden pole, overcame all the venom of the living serpents: and Christ being hung upon the cross, and dying, quenched the old poisons" or venoms "of the devil, and *delivered*" or freed "*all that were struck*" or stung "by him." This father, in his dialect and manner of expressions could not more significantly declare for general redemption than he hath done in the now-recited testimonies. And the truth is, that passages and sayings of like import are very familiar and frequent in his writings. In one place he saith, "Judas cast away the price of silver for which he sold the Lord, and acknowledged not the price *with which himself was redeemed* by the Lord." In another "Unless he (Christ) had been crucified, the *world* had

not been *redeemed*” In a third, “For the blood of Christ is so” or, upon such terms “shed for remission of *all sins*” or for remission of the sins of all men “that it is able to blot out that very sin by which it was shed.” In a fourth, “We read in the Scriptures that the safety” or salvation “*of all mankind is purchased*” or bought “with the blood of our Saviour, as the apostle Peter saith,” &c. In a fifth, “If therefore the price of our life be the blood of the Lord, see then how it is not the earthly uncertainty of a field that was redeemed therewith, *but the eternal safety of the whole world.*” In a sixth, “God in no” other “way provided more beneficially” or bountifully “for mankind, than when the very wisdom of God, that is, his only Son, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, attempted to assume whole man.” In a seventh, “What then is the meaning of, God is in the midst of her? This signifies that God is equal” or equally affected “unto all, and accepteth no man’s person. For as that which is in the midst, is alike distant from all the extreme parts, so God is said to be in the midst” inasmuch “as he consults and provides equally *for all.*” In an eighth, speaking in a rhetorical apostrophe unto Thomas, he expresseth himself thus: “Thomas, look well on our price, diligently consider the prints of the nails, and in his very wounds acknowledge” or take notice of “the medicine or treasure of mankind.” And not long after, “Death was given unto one, *that it might be taken away from all.*”

It were easy to make this pile of testimonies far greater, but that we judge these specified abundantly sufficient to convince any man, that hath not abjured ingenuity, that Austin’s habitual and standing judgment was, that Christ by his death atoned the sins of all men without exception. Nor can there, I verily believe, so much as one saying be produced out of all his writing, wherein the contrary is asserted by him. Many places, I grant, may readily be found, wherein he denies the possession, and actual enjoyment of the redemption or salvation purchased by Christ, unto many, as viz. to all final impenitents and unbelievers: of such an import as this is that saying of his : “The Lord did not by his resurrection repair” or restore “unto forgiveness, all” or any “unbelievers, and such who for their heinous sins were adjudged to eternal punishments.” Such sayings as this, are of perfect accord with the doctrine asserted by us, Chap. 17, of this discourse, where we acknowledged and proved at large, that notwithstanding the redemption purchased by Christ for all men, yet no man dying in impenitency and unbelief shall be saved. Now if Augustin

were of this judgment, that Christ died for all men, there is little question to be made, but that this opinion or doctrine reigned generally in the Christian church in his days (and so had done before him) as orthodox and catholic; considering that he was, as the ablest, so the strictest and closest defender of that faith, which was more generally esteemed orthodox, and professed, taught, and held throughout the Christian world. Nevertheless let us hear other learned, pious, and orthodox writers delivering their sense about the said point, in their own words.

Ambrose, with whose ministry and eloquence Augustin was much affected, asserted the same doctrine without fear. "The sun," saith he, "is commanded to arise upon all men. And this sun doth indeed arise daily upon all men. But that mystical Sun of righteousness is risen unto" or, for "*all men*, is come to *all men*, hath suffered *for all men*, and is risen again *for all men*, and hath therefore suffered, that he might take away the sin of the world. But if any man believeth not in Christ, he depriveth himself of the *general benefit*, as if a man by shutting the windows, should shut out the beams of the sun, it doth not prove that therefore the sun is not risen upon, or unto all, because such a man depriveth himself of his heat. But as for what concerneth the sun, he keeps his prerogative: but this man acteth the part of an unwise man in shutting out" from himself "the favour of the common light." And a little before he had said: "The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, because forgiveness of sins is granted" or given "unto *all men*, *i. e.* offered as a gift unto all. In another place thus: "The brazen serpent was (in a figure) as it were fastened to a cross, because it was" hereby "declared that the true serpent was to be crucified for mankind, who should frustrate" or, make void, "the poison of the serpent, the devil, being" indeed "cursed in the figure, but yet in truth was he, that should take away the sins of the whole world." Once more: "So then he" the apostle Paul "saith, that there is a Saviour left to us for a suffrage of life," meaning, by whom life is voted in heaven for us "which the law could not provide: which" Saviour "God from the beginning decreed should be born: who because he was the only person that could be found without sin, having overcome the enemy of mankind, *abolished*" or blotted out "*the sins of all men*."

Jerome, who also was contemporary with Augustin, though somewhat his senior, gave the right hand of fellowship unto him in the doctrine now under inquest. We shall only taste his judgment in this behalf, in a few

testimonies from amongst many. "The Lord," saith he, "being about to suffer *for all the world*, and to *redeem all the nations* on the earth with his blood, makes his abode in Bethany, the house of obedience," &c. Elsewhere, having recited that of our Saviour, "So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," &c., John 3:16, he goeth on thus: "But if now a considerate reader shall in his secret thought answer, or reply, Why are there many who are not saved, if he saved them, and loved them, and spared their children, and redeemed them with his blood, and assumed them" or, their nature, "and exalted them, being assumed? There is a plain reason to be given; for they believed not, and grieved," or, exasperated, "the Holy Spirit," &c. A little after, speaking of John Baptist, of whom it is said that "he came to be a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe; he subjoineth, "He is not presently in fault, if many refused to believe; for the will of him that came, was that *all men* should *believe* and be *saved*." Once more, writing to Oceanus, he challengeth some erroneous person for suggesting unto him "that there are some sins which Christ cannot purge with his blood, and that the scars of men's old sins stick so deep in their bodies and souls, that they cannot be healed, " or, made less, " by his medicine." Concerning whom he demandeth, "What else doth such a person but make Christ to have died in vain? For he died in vain, if there be any whom he cannot quicken," or, give life unto. "And John, pointing at Christ with his finger and voice, 'Behold the Lamb of God! Behold him that taketh away the sins of the world,' should speak an untruth, if there were any such persons in the world whose sins Christ had not abolished," or, blotted out. "For they who are not taken into consideration by the indulgence of Christ, must be proved not to belong to the world; or if they be of the world, one of the two must take place: if they be delivered from their sins, they give testimony to the power of Christ: if they be not delivered, they do in effect demonstrate the weakness of the thing; which God forbid that we should believe concerning him who is omnipotent." He that remains yet unsatisfied whether this father held general redemption or no, may, if he please to seek, find more ballast for his thoughts in this kind, in what he hath written upon chap, 43 and chap. 45 of the prophecy of Ezekiel. I confess, that when he speaks of the application or actual enjoyment of the redemption purchased by Christ, he then limiteth it (as all the fathers generally do, and as we expressly did

Chap. xvii. of this discourse,) to the particular society of believers. We shall not need to cite places upon this account.

Chrysostom, who lived some years before Austin, was not at all behind him in avouching the same doctrine concerning the extent of the redemption of Christ. Writing upon those words, Heb. 9:28, "So Christ was offered to bear the sins of many," he demandeth thus: "Why doth he say, 'of many,' and not of all? viz. because all have not believed. For he indeed *died for all men*, and *to save all men*, as much as was in him. For that death" of his "did counterbalance the destruction of all men. But he did not bear" or, offer up "the sins of all men, because they themselves *would not*." So that he clearly resolves the perishing of men, not into any want of atonement made by Christ for them, but into themselves, and their own wilfulness in not believing. For he expressly saith, "that Christ died for all men, and that to save them." Again, commenting upon chap. 2:9, of the same epistle, and having rehearsed these words of the apostle, "That he through the grace of God should taste death for every man," "not," saith he, "for believers only, *but for the whole world*: for he died for all men. For what though all do not believe? He hath fully done that which was proper for him to do." Much to the same purpose in another place: "Although Christ did not gain all men, yet he died for all men," so "fulfilling that which belonged unto him." Elsewhere, comparing the lamb offered in the Levitical sacrifices, with Christ the Lamb of God; concerning the former he saith, that "it never took away any one man's sin so much as once; whereas the latter" taketh away "the sin of all the world and that "when it was in danger of perishing, it presently delivered it from the wrath of God." To reserve many other testimonies offered by this author in the case in hand, to another occasion, in case it he offered, upon Rom. 4:25, he hath these words : "That thou mayst not say,. How can we, being under the guilt of so many and such great sins, be justified? he showeth thee him that hath abolished" or, cancelled "all sins."

Athanasius lived somewhat above a hundred years before Augustin, and yet was full of the spirit of that doctrine concerning the redemption by Christ, which we contend for. "Since," saith he, "the debt due from all men was meet to be paid, (for all men ought to have died,) for this cause chiefly he came," as it were, "on pilgrimage to us, and after the demonstration of his godhead by" his "works, it remained that he should offer up a sacrifice *for all*, delivering up his temple unto death for all

men, that so he might discharge and free *all men* from that old transgression." Elsewhere: "With the blood of his passion," or, mactation, "he simply redeemed all men." In another place: "There was need of death, and it was requisite that death should be endured for all, that what was due from all might be satisfied. Wherefore the Word, for that it could not die, for it was immortal, assumed to itself a body capable of dying, that he might offer that as his own *for all men*, and that suffering *for all* by means of his coming thereunto, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil," &c. In another tractate the same author thus: "It became the Lord, being desirous to make a renovation, to make new the first Adam, that, his sin being dissolved, he might take away sin oh all hands *from the universe of mankind*" In another, thus: "For the coming," or, presence, "of the Saviour in the flesh, was the solution of death, and the safety" or, salvation "of every creature." If the reader desires to know more of the mind of this author, touching the point in question, he may please to peruse his learned tract, entitled, "De Incamatione Verbi Dei," wherein he hath frequent occasion to declare his judgment therein.

Hilarius, another orthodox father, who lived not long after the former, writeth upon Matthew to this effect: "He," Christ, "admonished them to learn what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,' viz. that the law bound up," or consisting only, "in the observation of sacrifices, could afford no help" unto men, "but that safety," or salvation, "was reserved *for all men whatsoever* in the indulgence of mercy." And presently after, speaking of Christ: "He came unto," or for, "ALL MEN: how then doth he say that he came not to," or for, "the righteous?" His answer is, that there were none such, but all were sinners. Elsewhere he discourseth thus : " The Son of God was born of a virgin for the sake of mankind, and the Holy Ghost himself assisting him in this operation, and overshadowing with his power, (being the power of God,) he planted the beginnings of a body for himself, that, being made man of a virgin, he might receive that nature of flesh in" or upon " himself, and that by the fellowship of this conjunction the whole body of mankind might be sanctified; that as *all men were hid*" or built "*in him*, by means of his willingness to assume a body, so again he might be related unto *all men*," or carried back into all men, " by that which was invisible in him," meaning his divine nature. Once more: "For he did this once, offering



himself a sacrifice unto God, being to redeem” or recover “the *whole salvation of mankind* by the oblation of tins holy and perfect sacrifice.” Lastly, (because this testimony, being somewhat more emphatical than its fellows, would not be omitted:) “For he took the flesh of sin, that in the assumption of our flesh he might forgive sins, being made a partaker hereof, by assumption, not by sinning, by” his “ death blotting out the sentence of death, that *by a new creation of mankind*, he might *abolish the constitution of the former decree*, suffering himself to be crucified, that by the curse of the cross he might strike through,” dissolve, or make void “ all the curses of that terrene” or earthly “damnation.” Whether he calleth that “damnation,” whereunto men became subject by Adam’s transgression, “earthly,” because he judged the extent of the penalty of it to consist only in the dissolution of the body by death, as if the punishment of hell fire came in upon the account of the gospel, in case it should be rejected, (which is the judgment of some amongst us,) I shall not dispute, nor undertake to determine, but pass on to bear the sense of other learned, orthodox, and pious fathers, much about the same time with the former.

Cyril of Jerusalem, much about the same times, delivereth his sense about the redemption of Christ thus: “The crown of the cross is this: it led by a light those that were blind through ignorance, it set at liberty those that were detained under sin, and *redeemed the whole world of men*. And wonder not that the *whole world* should he redeemed, since he was not a bare man, hut the only begotten Son of God that died for it.” And again: “Knowest thou why” or for what end “the kind Lord did not decline death? It was that the whole world might not be destroyed through sin;” *i. e.* as appears from the former sentence and the scope of the place, that the whole world might be saved by him. In another place the same author saith, “Heaven and earth are full of his glory, the ends of the world are full of his goodness, full of his praise, the *whole nature of man* is full of his condescension,” &c. A little after, speaking of Christ: “He,” saith he, “that is the offerer is the same that is offered up *for the world*.” And not long after: “Let Adam rejoyce, saying unto Christ, by Simeon, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.’ Now dost, thou dismiss” or loose “me from eternal bands, now dost thou deliver me from corruption, now dischargest thou my sorrow.” Evident it is, that in this last testimony he bringeth in Adam speaking, not only, nor so much,

in his own name, personally considered, but in the name of his whole posterity also.

Eusebius, another author of note about these times, attesteth the same doctrine, by affirming that “the saints of old, by the teachings of the Divine Spirit, came to learn long before that there was a certain venerable and great sacrifice, that should he highly accepted with God, which should in time come unto men, and which would be the *expiation of the whole world*.” And a little after: “This was the Christ of God, concerning whom it was said of old that he should come unto men, and should be slain, after the manner of a beast,” or sheep, “*for all mankind*.” And again, not long after: “According to the testimonies of the prophets, there was found that great, and greatly to be esteemed price, for the redeeming both Jews and Grecians, I mean that *expiation*” or atonement “*for the whole world*, that sacrifice for the souls *of all men*, that offering for *every spot and for every sin*, that Lamb of God,” &c. Elsewhere he saith, speaking of Christ, that “he took care for the salvation *of all men that had been born from the beginning of the world*, and to destroy him by his death who had the power of death, the devil.” This author abounds with sayings of like import. Arnobius, another Christian writer about the same times, of good account, bringeth in the heathen arguing and demanding of Christians thus : “If the Saviour of mankind become, as you Christians affirm, why doth he not, by the same bounty, deliver all men ? He doth not deliver all alike, who calleth all alike. He doth not keep back or reject any person from his sovereign grace,” or, indulgence, “who affords the same power unto high, low, servants, women, children, of coming unto him.” To this, this author answereth: “The fountain of life is open *for all men*, nor is any man denied the right” or, power “of drinking, nor driven away” from it. “If your pride” or, disdain “be such, that you reject the benefit of the gift offered, nay, if your wisdom be so great as to call those things which are offered by Christ, pastime and toys, how doth he offend who inviteth you” notwithstanding “who hath only this to do, viz. to expose the fruit” or, blessing “of his bounty to the arbitrement” or, free choice “of that right” or, power of choosing “which is given you ?”

Didymus, another author of note in this century, and who was Jerome’s tutor, in his third book concerning the Holy Ghost, writeth to this purpose: “Wherefore the Father, even for their salvation not sparing his own Son, delivered him up unto death that by the death of his Son, he

being destroyed who had the power of death, that is, the devil, he might *redeem all those* that were held in the bands of captivity by him.” Not long after, speaking of the Jews, “They,” saith he, “rising to the highest pitch of impiety, betrayed and crucified the Lord the Saviour, who vouchsafed to come down to the earth *for the salvation of all men.*” Afterwards, he calls “Judas the betrayer of his Master and *Saviour*”

Basil, surnamed the Great, about the same time, or not long after, judged it a point of faithfulness unto him whose ambassador he was, to concur with his fellows in the same doctrine. “What,” saith he, “could man give of so much value for the redemption of his soul? Yet was there found for *all men together* one worthy price of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he shed” or, poured out “*for us all.*” Soon after: “If we consider his kindness and love to us, he calleth us brethren, and descendeth to the nature of man, who gave himself a propitiation *for the whole world*, and not for himself.” In another place he saith, “David, prophetically foreseeing the future grace of the loving-kindness of the Lord towards men, saith, that it is meet to serve and love him, who hath bestowed such and so great a benefit upon mankind, that he hath not spared his own Son, but hath delivered him up *for all men.*” More testimonies from this author are at hand, if need be.

Gregory Nyssen, brother to the last-named father, stands by his brother in the pre-asserted doctrine, saying, that “as the beginning of death being first” only “in one, passed through the whole nature of man: in like manner the beginning of the resurrection, by means of one, extendeth itself unto the *whole nature* of man.” More plainly in another place: “He” (speaking of Christ) “sanctifieth unto God and the Father not only the first born of men, but even the *whole tribe*” or generation “of mankind, by means of the first-fruits of our lump being in him, that is, by means of that flesh which he took of us, enlivened with a rational” or, intellectual soul, “whereby he did, as it were, leaven the *whole mass*” or, concretion “of the essence” or, substance “of mankind with holiness.”

Gregory Nazianzen, another great light burning and shining in the house of the living God (the church) about these times, gave forth the light of the same doctrine in his ministry. Speaking of Christ, he saith, “To the Jews, he becomes as a Jew, that he may gain the Jews: to those that are under the law, as one under the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law: to the weak” he became “as weak, that he might

save those that were weak. He is made all things unto *all men*, that he may win” or, gain to himself “*all men*” In another place he saith, “There is no matter of wonder like unto that of my salvation: a few drops of blood refashioning the *whole world*, and, like that which causeth the coagulation of milk, knitting and gathering us together in one *with all men*.”

Elsewhere, in his Christian Poems, he speaketh to this effect:

**From one we all proceed, we all one breath  
Breathe out; to one we all incline;  
God unto all alike, his birth, his death,  
His resurrection, and heaven, doth consign.**

Epiphanius, a little before the two last-named Gregories, writing against heresies, asserteth the doctrine we contend for, as orthodox. “First,” saith he, speaking of Christ, “He offered himself that he might discharge the sacrificing of the Old Testament, presenting” unto God “a more perfect living” sacrifice “for all the world.” Afterwards: “How vain” and bootless “is all the understanding that accompanieth heresy? for they” heretics “even deny their own Lord, that bought them with his own blood.”

Tertullian, who lived in the age next before the last-mentioned authors, though in some other points he declined the judgment of his orthodox predecessors, yet, in the doctrine under inquiry, he was one spirit with them. “What,” saith he, speaking of the wood by the casting of which into the water, the prophet Elisha caused the iron to swim which was sunk, “is more manifest than the sacrament,” or, mystical signification “of this wood?” As, namely, “that the hardness of this world,” meaning the obdurate world itself, “being sunk in the depth of error, is by the wood of Christ, that is, of his passion, delivered” or recovered “in baptism; that so that which long since perished by wood,” or, by a tree, “in Adam, might be restored by the wood,” or, tree, “of Christ.” A little after, applying unto Christ the story of Isaac carrying the wood, wherewith he was to have been offered, had not God recalled the command given to Abraham on this behalf, and of the ram caught by the horns in a thicket, which was offered, he doth it in words to this effect: “Christ, in his own time, carried” his “wood upon his shoulders, sticking,” or, hanging “upon the horns of the cross, having his head compassed

about with a crown of thorns: For it became him to be made a *sacrifice for all nations* and afterwards he saith, that he “was made a sacrifice,” or, offering, “in,” or through, “all things for us all.”

Origen, about the same time, held forth the same doctrine in the world, affirming that “our Lord and Saviour, being led as a lamb unto the slaughter, and offered up as a sacrifice of” or, upon “the altar, procured remission of sins *for the universal world*, &c. A little after : “So then the world is trained up, first to seek remission of sins by divers sacrifices, until it should come to a perfect sacrifice, a complete and absolute sacrifice, a lamb, of a year old, perfect, which should take away the sins of the *whole world*,” &c. Elsewhere he maketh the apostle Paul to have said, that “Christ had given himself for the redemption of *whole mankind*, that he might redeem those that were kept in bondage by sins, *by tasting death* without deceit, *for all men*.” I present the reader only with a little from these authors respectively, in comparison of what upon the same account might be transcribed from them.

Cyprian, a worthy author and martyr of this age, counted it no injury to the truth to abet the same doctrine. Having mentioned some examples, as he termeth them, of a propagation of creatures otherwise than according to the common course of nature, he advanceth this demand to salve the possibility, or rather to evince the probability of the virgin’s conception. “Shall, then,” saith he, “that seem incredible to be done by the power of God for the *redintegration*,” or new-making, “of the *whole world*, examples whereof are to be seen in the propagation of animal creatures?” Afterwards: “Christ then suffered not in the flesh with any detriment or injury to his Godhead, but that through the infirmity of the flesh, he might work salvation in *the midst of the earth*,” meaning, for all the world round about him. In another place he saith, “The corruption of nature, even in our first beginnings, deserved to be cast away and abandoned” by God. “But because the will was not in fault, God provided a remedy *against that general condemnation*, and tempered,” or qualified “the sentence of his justice, removing that hereditary burthen from the posterity,” or children, “and mercifully purging out the leaven of original corruption by the washing” of baptism “and anointing. But indignation and wrath deservedly returns hack upon them, who, after the grace of this indulgence” from God, in the forgiveness of their sins, “Voluntarily go astray and wander by sinning, abusing their own

freedom, being led, not by necessity, but by will; nor doth there remain for them any benefit,” or any thing gotten, “in the death of Christ, but the benefits” hereof “being despised by them, do most justly condemn them.” This passage is pregnant with the assertion of both the main doctrines vindicated in the, present discourse, as viz., 1. That Christ hath died as well for those that shall be condemned and perish as for those that shall be saved, and, consequently, for all men. 2. That those also may be condemned and perish, who had sometimes obtained remission of sins by Christ.

That further may be taken into consideration, by occasion of the former part of this quotation, that it was the judgment and sense of the ancient fathers and Christians generally, (I know none to be excepted,) that in baptism there was always a particular application made to the person baptized of the general redemption purchased by Christ, so that he that was baptized, if an infant, received thereby exemption and deliverance from the guilt of original sin derived from Adam: if a person of mature years, not only this, but forgiveness also of all his actual sins committed formerly: For which opinion, though I do not as yet see any demonstrative ground, either in the Scriptures or in reason, and, God sparing me life to finish the second part of this work, I shall in one particular declare my sense in opposition to it; yet the opinion, I confess, so far taketh with me, partly for the proofs’ sake which are produced, with some probability, for it; partly for the signal learning, gifts, sharpness of judgment, quickness of apprehension, and, above all, for the singular piety and zeal for the truth, found in so many assertors of it; partly also for those degrees of inevidence and inconcludency which are found in the arguments usually insisted upon to prove the contrary, that my soul cannot enter into the secret of those, who, upon a confident presumption that the said opinion is erroneous, refuse to offer their children unto baptism; hereby, according to the sense of all the fathers, as hath been in effect said, exposing their precious souls to a certain loss of salvation by Christ, in case they die before they come to years of discretion. Certainly it is no point of Christianity to lay such wagers as these upon the truth of any opinion which hath such a cloud of enemies and opposers of it, as all the ancient fathers, without exception, as far as yet I understand, and together with these (for we cannot reasonably imagine the contrary) all the Christian churches in the primitive times, with all the knowledge,

parts, zeal, and faithfulness of both: yea, and some of our late Protestant writers themselves, and these of eminent worth and note, (see Chap. 13., page 435,) especially when men have no better or more satisfactory grounds for their opinion than have yet been produced against the lawfulness of infant baptism. But this by the way.

Clemens of Alexandria, another famous champion of Christianity about these times, was of the same faith in the point in hand with his fellows. In one place he demands, "How is he," speaking of Christ, "a Saviour and Lord, if he be not the *Saviour and Lord of all*?" In another he termeth Christ the "disposer" or administrator "of all things according to his Father's will, governing" or taking order for "the *salvation of all men*" Elsewhere he argueth thus: "Either the Lord doth not take care for all men, and this either because he is not able, which is not right" to suppose, "or because, though able enough, yet he will not: but this is not incident to him that is good: nor is he backward," or indisposed hereunto, "through voluptuousness, inasmuch as for our sakes he assumed flesh exposed to sufferings; or else he doth take *care of all*; which indeed becometh him that is made Lord of all: for he is a *Saviour, not of some, and not of others*," &c. In an oration to the Gentiles he calls unto them thus: "Hear ye that are afar off, and hearken ye that are near: the word is not hid" or concealed "from any: the light" thereof "is common, it *shineth unto all men*," &c.

Justin Martyr, whose writings, amongst those that treat of Christian religion, and are judged authentic, and not spurious, are the most ancient that I know since the days of the apostles, giveth frequent testimony to the truth of the same doctrine.

In one place he presenteth the saints "as knowing" or acknowledging "that he that hath wrought that great salvation *for mankind*, is praiseworthy, greatly to be feared, and the Maker" or Creator "of heaven and earth." In another, speaking of Christ, he saith, that "now through the will of God, being made man for *the sake of mankind*, he submitted himself to suffer whatsoever the inconsiderate Jews were inspired by the devil to inflict upon him." In a third he saith, that "Christ neither submitted himself to be born, nor yet to be crucified, as if he needed these things", for himself, "but for that kind" or generation "of men which in" or by "Adam was fallen under death and the deceit of the serpent." By "mankind," or the "kind of men," he cannot mean a few, a circumscribed

number, a small parcel of men, as the elect, so called, are known to be: these in no propriety of speech can be called το ἄνθρώπων γένος, “the generation” or “kind of men or, if in one place he should have meant “the elect” by such an expression, it is no ways like but that in some other, he would have expressed himself more plainly. But what he means by *τὸ γένος τοῶν ἀνθρώπων*, “that genus or “general kind of men,” appears evidently enough by this descriptive character which he gives of it, ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδάμ ὑπὸ θάνατον ἰητητώκει, *i. e.* “which from Adam,” or through Adam, “was fallen under death.” This, we know, is the adequate and appropriate character, not of some men, but of all mankind without exception. But the sun is visible enough without a candle.

Ireneus, not long after the former, avouched the doctrine of our contest over and over. “As Eve,” saith he, “becoming disobedient, became” hereby “the cause of death both to herself and to the universe of mankind; so Mary, having the man predestinated” by God, meaning Christ, “notwithstanding” her being involved in the death brought upon all mankind by Eve, yet, “becoming an obedient virgin, she proved the cause” or means “of salvation *unto the universe of men.*” His meaning is, that by submitting unto the pleasure of God, signified unto her by the angel, concerning the bearing and bringing forth of his Son Jesus Christ in the flesh, she had the grace accordingly vouchsafed unto her to bear and bring him forth who was the “author or cause of salvation to universal mankind;” by which submission and service she, in a sense, became the cause or means also of this salvation. Elsewhere the same father saith, that “Christ recapitulated” or gathered into one “in himself *all nations* dispersed” up and down the world “even from Adam, *all tongues and every generation of men* together with the person of Adam himself.” In another place he gives this reason why Paul saith that “we are reconciled through the body of his flesh,” viz. “because his righteous” or just “flesh reconciled *that flesh which was detained in sin*, and brought it into favour” or friendship “with God.” Now, that flesh which was detained in sin, was not the flesh only of the predestinate or elect, but of all mankind without exception.

These are the principal fathers and writers of the primitive times, and before Augustin, that are now extant or known: and all these with one mouth (as we have heard) and with a “*nemine contradicente*” give testimony to the truth of that great doctrine, which hath been avouched



in this discourse, viz., that the redemption purchased by the death of Christ, was for all men, considered as men respectively, and not for the elect only or those that shall actually partake of it, and be saved.

The writers of best note and repute, since Austin (until these later times of reformation) and from whose writings the best and steadiest informations are to be had, what doctrines or opinions ruled in the churches of Christ, and amongst those Christians that were judged orthodox and sound in the faith, in their days, are these: Prosper, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Leo, Fulgentius, Primasius, Gregorius, Beda, Theophylact, Anselm, (Ecumenius, Bernard. Let us briefly hear what is resolved by these respectively, upon the question concerning the intentions of God about the extent of Christ's death.

Prosper, well known for a thorough disciple of Augustin, and who served his generation not long after him, declareth his sense in the business in hand plainly enough, in words to this effect: "All men are truly said to be redeemed, yet all men are not gotten out of captivity. For that cup of immortality, which is tempered" or compounded "of the infirmity of men and power of God, hath in it wherewith to profit all men; but it helpeth not unless it be taken" or drank. "And the Lord Jesus expressly saith, that his flesh is bread from heaven" or, an heavenly bread "which giveth life unto the world. But except it be eaten, it giveth no life: as in the parable in the gospel, the marriage" feast "was prepared for all that were called; but they only enjoyed it, who came with a wedding garment unto it." Elsewhere he saith: "Our Saviour is most truly said to have been crucified for the redemption of the whole world, both in respect of the human nature truly assumed by him, as also because of the common destruction" of men "in the first man: and yet" in a sense "he may also be said to have been crucified only for those, who receive benefit by his death," *i. e.* that his crucifying was, in the consequent intentions of God, intended only for such. "For the evangelist saith, that Jesus was to die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he might gather the sons of God dispersed into one, &c. He gave his blood for the world, and the world would not be redeemed, because the darkness received not the light." These last words plainly interpret his meaning in those, wherein he had Said, that "Christ may be said to have been crucified for those only who reap benefit by his death and imply, that his meaning herein was only this, that God by his consequent will or intention,

intended the death of Christ, or the benefit of his death only for such who come in time to partake hereof, viz. by believing. Concerning the antecedent and consequent will or intentions of God, see before, Chap. 17 page 581. He that yet questions the judgment of this author in the point, may please to peruse the brief sentence which he gives upon the ninth chapter or head, Capp. Gallorum; and especially those two books De Vocatione Gentium, (which though some ascribe unto Ambrose, yet are they discernible enough by some characters to be the writings of Prosper, and are cited under his name by the Synod of Dort.) In these he shall find general redemption by Christ, asserted ten times over, the main scope of these books being to prove, that there is no person of mankind simply excluded from participating in the saving grace of redemption purchased by Christ.

Cyril of Alexandria (about the same time with Prosper) filleth his writings with the same truth. "They," saith he, speaking of the Jews, "unjustly desire his death, wickedly lie in wait for him ; unmercifully slay him, thrust him out of their land and city, who is the life, the light, the salvation *of all men*." Elsewhere: " Since it became" him "to suffer that corruption, sin and death, which man brought in" to the world "being by this means to be turned back," or, destroyed, "he gave himself a counter-ransom for the life *of all men*." Once more: "It is without controversy that the *whole world* is saved, Immanuel having died for it." See more in this author upon the same account, De Recta Fide ad Reginas, &c. c. 22. circa initium. In Joh. lib. 2. c. 1, and in 3. cap. Joh. ver. 17, &c.

Theodoret, somewhat before the two last-named authors, conceived that he found the universality of redemption by Christ in the Scriptures. For commenting the fifth chapter to the Romans, he maketh the words of the apostle equipollent to these: "The munificence of grace overcometh the decree of justice. For when man sinned, the whole kind" or race "is punished. But now when *all men* behave themselves impiously and unjustly, he doth not inflict punishment" upon them "but granteth life" unto them. Afterwards in the progress of his exposition upon the same chapter, he presents the apostle speaking thus to his Romans: "doubt not of the things I speak with relation unto Adam. For if these tilings be true, as they are, and that when he sinned, his whole race received a decree" or sentence "of death, evident it is, that the righteousness of" our "Saviour procureth *life for all men*."

Leo, commonly styled the Great, very frequently bewrayeth his judgment to stand to the same point. Comparing the death of the Lord Christ with the deaths of other holy men, he saith, that “there were but single” or particular “deaths in every of these respectively, nor did any of these persons discharge the debt of any other by dying, whereas amongst the sons of men, our Lord Jesus alone was found, in whom all men were crucified, all men died, all men were buried, yea, and all men rose again.” Elsewhere thus: “That general and deadly hand-writing of our being sold” under sin and death “was” cancelled, and “made void, and the bargain of” our “captivity passed into a right of redemption.” Once more: “That he” Christ “might repair the life of *all men*, he took on him the cause of all men; and that which he of all men was not hound to do, he made void the force of the old handwriting, by making payment” of the debt due thereby “*for all men.*”

Fulgentius, about the year 500, succeeded his predecessors in the inheritance of their judgment concerning the universality of redemption by Christ. “As the devil,” saith he, “smote” or wounded “whole man by deceiving him, so God, by assuming whole man, saved him, that so one and the same might be acknowledged both the Maker and *Redeemer of the whole creature*,” or creation, “who was able both to make that which was not, and to *repair*” or restore “*that which was fallen*”

Primasius, who lived somewhat more than a hundred years after Augustin, helped to keep the doctrine we plead alive in the world. “As Christ,” saith he, “suffered reproach from his own,” he means the Jews, “whom he *came to redeem*, when they said unto him, ‘Thou hast a devil,’ and offered him all other indignities, even to his passion itself; so did Moses likewise,” &c. If Christ came to redeem those who charged him with having a devil, with casting out devils through Beelzebub, and who maliciously prosecuted him with all manner of injuries and evil-entreaties, and this unto death, doubtless he came not to redeem the elect only, or such who in conclusion repent, believe, and are saved: for some of these, and particularly those that said he had an unclean spirit, were charged by him with that sin which he saith shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Matt. 12:82, compared with Mark 3:28 —30. The same author elsewhere saith, that “Christ, as much as lay in him, *died for all men*, however his death profiteth none but only those who are willing to believe in him.” And yet again: “The Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost is” or are “the God of all men, and therefore desireth that *all that he hath made should he saved.*” A little after, “The blood of Christ hath verily been shed *for all men*, benefiteth them that helieve.”

Gregory, surnamed the Great, about the year 570, counted it neither heresy nor error to teach the same doctrine. “The Father then,” saith he, “being just, and punishing him who was just,” meaning Christ, “disposeth all things justly: because upon this account *he justifieth all,*” or all things, “because he condemneth him for sinners who was without sin.” Elsewhere he termeth Christ “*The Redeemer of mankind;*” and in another place expressly saith that “Christ *redeemed all men* by his cross; but, yet that it remaineth, that he that endeavours to be redeemed,” *i. e.* to enjoy the redemption purchased for him by Christ, “and to reign with God, be crucified.”

Bede, somewhat above a hundred years after Gregory, propagated the same doctrine in the world for truth. “Joseph,” saith he, “in the Egyptian language, signifieth Saviour of the world. This is manifest in Christ, since under the figure of Joseph, he is declared to be the Saviour, not of the one only land of Egypt, but also of the *whole world.*” And soon after, “But in our Joseph,” meaning Christ, “the *whole world* deserved to receive increase.”

Theophylact, who lived more than two hundred years after him, viz. about the year 930, (as some of our best chronologers calculate the time of his mortality,) is a sufficient witness that the same doctrine was alive in the church in his time. “He verily,” saith he, speaking of Christ, “died *for all men*: and canst not thou endure to pray for them?” Elsewhere we have words to this effect from his pen: “As by the offence” or fell “of one, the curse came upon all men, (that which before he called judgment,” or condemnation, “he now calleth an offence, that is, the sin of Adam,) even so by the righteousness of one, Christ, grace is come unto *all men*, giving *unto them* both *justification* instead of sin, *and life* instead of death.” In another place he saith, that “the apostle showed how that all men were indeed condemned from” or by “Adam, but were saved from” or by “Christ.”

Ecumenius, somewhat above a hundred years after him, favoured the same doctrine, as truth. “Judgment,” saith he, “*i. e.* condemnation, came from” or by “one Adam, upon all men: but the free gift and donation of God prevailed so far, that it even abolished” or blotted out “the sin of

Adam: and not this sin alone, but all others likewise which men sinned after that sin: yea, and did not this only, but also brought them into a state of justification, that is, unto righteousness.”

Anselm, not long after the last-mentioned author, appeared in defence of the same doctrine. “He alone,” saith he, speaking of Christ, “as by dying paid,” or discharged, “so did he blot out” cancel and make void “that hand-writing, which in a kind of hereditary way passed along from our protoplast,” Adam, “through *all generations*.” Elsewhere, he exhibiteth God inviting “all men to come unto him, and declaring that *no person* whatsoever *needs fear* a *repulse*, since he desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he should live.” In another place he saith, that “Christ is become a means of safety, and this not of any inferior kind, hut of that which is eternal; and this not to a few, but *to all*.” And again, that “God the mediator, which God hath placed between himself and men, underwent death for all men, that he might redeem all men from death.”

Bernard, somewhat after the year 1100, followed the tract of the same doctrine. In one place he saith, that “Christ wept for the sins of the *sons of Adam*, and afterwards shed his blood for them.” In another, having repeated the words of the apostle, “If one died for all, then were all dead,” he glosseth thus: “That namely the satisfaction of one might be *imputed unto all*, as this one hare the sins *of all*.” Once more, “And that is the profession of a Christian’s faith, that he which liveth, should not now live unto himself, but unto him who died *for all*. Nor let any man say unto me, I will live unto him, but not unto thee; since he did not only live unto all men, but even died *for all men* also.”

Nor hath the doctrine asserted by us been thus fully and clearly attested only by that successive generation of orthodox and learned antiquity, which we have heard speaking, as it were, with one mouth the same things with us therein, in their particular and respective writings, but hath received credit and countenance, also, from all councils and synods of any ancient date, as far as my reading and memory are able to inform me, which have had occasion to take cognizance thereof, or of that which is contrary to it. The first general council after the apostle’s days, was that assembled at Nice, about the year. 325, by the authority of Constantine the Great, in the twentieth year of his reign; a council that hath always been of sovereign esteem in all Christian churches. This council, in that symbol of faith, or creed, composed by the members of it,

make this profession, or confession of their faith, in the point we speak of, “ We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for *us men*,” not for us elect, or for us believers, saints, or the like, but for *us men*, “and for our salvation descended, and was incarnate and made man, suffered, and rose again,” &c. Evident it is, that the council drew up this form, or confession of faith, for the use of the generality of those who professed, or should afterwards profess Christianity, with an intent and desire that every Christian respectively should make the same profession with them. Now, then, if their meaning in the said symbol were, that Christ was incarnate, made man, suffered, &c. only for such persons who were elect, as some call election, such, I mean, who should be actually saved, and not for the generality of men; one of the two must necessarily be supposed : either, 1. That they judged all professors of Christianity to be elect, in this sense, and, consequently, such as should be saved: or else, 2. That they intended that men should make profession of their faith at peradventure, and profess that they believed that, which they knew not whether it was true or no, and so could have no sufficient ground to believe it. Yea, and that many should make such a profession, wherein the event would certainly prove them to have lied both unto God and men when they made it, For certain it is, and demonstrable from the Scriptures, that all that profess Christianity in the world will not at last be saved. When, therefore, any of these shall profess and say, “ I believe that Christ, the Son of God, was made man, and suffered for me,” in case he did not suffer for him, which, say our adversaries, the event of his non-salvation will evince, in that profession of his, he must needs be found to have been a liar. Therefore, without controversy, the sense of the Nicene fathers, in the mentioned passage of their creed, was, that Christ became man, and suffered death for all men without exception. Now this Niceno creed, (as is well known to those that are a little versed in ecclesiastical history) was attested and subscribed by the three (Ecumenical councils next following; the first at Constantinople, the second at Ephesus, the third at Chalcedon. Nor do I remember that it was ever censured or rejected by any council or synod, esteemed orthodox. I shall not insist upon that epistle of Cyril of Alexandria (an author lately mentioned,) written to Nestorius, the heretic, approved by three general councils: in which epistle Christ is expressly termed the Saviour of us all. Gerardus Johannes Vossius, a late Protestant writer of good note, a diligent searcher into, and impartial

relater of matters of antiquity, reporteth, that by a synod assembled at Mentz, in the year 848, of which Rabanus Maurus was president, and at which Haymo was present, Goteschalcus the monk was condemned, who, amongst other erroneous opinions held, "That they who perish, although they sometimes believed, and were baptized, yet were not redeemed by Christ, but only sacramentally," or as far as the sign of redemption reacheth, "nor ever separated from the mass of perdition." The same author addeth further, that soon after this Moguntine Synod, there followed a council of the church of Rhemes, and of many other bishops in France, whereof Hincmarus, a learned man in these times, was president; this council, he saith, approved the judgment of the former, touching their censure of Goteschalcus. Yea, he proceedeth, and saith yet further, that the church of Lyons, although in many things it rather inclined to Goteschalcus than to the two late-mentioned synods, yet in the particular in hand it approved the sentence of the said synods. In a large transcription which he exhibiteth from the acts of this last synod, he citeth words to this effect: "How then when they are baptized in the death of Christ, and are washed from their sins in *his blood*, is that true renovation and true purgation wrought, if they yet remain in the mass of damnation and perdition concrete, and not severed?" He speaketh, as appears all along the discourse, of such persons who finally apostatise and perish. Therefore the clear sense of this council also was, that those who are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, and consequently who were redeemed by him, may notwithstanding perish. The same doctrine, as the same author reporteth, was approved and further established by another synod held at Valentia, in France, consisting of the bishops or ministers of the fore-mentioned church of Lyons, and of two other churches; who professed that "They did believe it, as a thing meet to be held with the firmest belief, that as some of those who are truly regenerate and truly redeemed, are eternally saved by means of their continuance, through the grace of God, in their redemption ; so that others *of them*, because they would not abide in the safety of that faith which they once received, and chose rather, whether by embracing corrupt doctrine, or by wickedness of life, to reject and *make void the grace of redemption* than to preserve it, are never able to arrive at the fulness of salvation, or to attain eternal happiness."

If my library would hold out, it is like I might be able to produce other

councils and synods, besides these insisted upon, interested in the same doctrine which these, as we have heard, avouched for orthodox. But the joint testimony of those which have been produced is, I suppose, matter enough and proper enough to stop the mouth of that, whether ignorant or worse-conditioned calumny, which traduceth the opinion or doctrine of general redemption, as if it were an old rotten popish opinion that had been from time to time rejected and thrown out of the church by all orthodox and sound men. The truth is, I have not in all my reading, which I confess is of no considerable compass for my years, to my best remembrance met with the censure or rejection of the said doctrine in the acts or records of any one council or synod whatsoever, unless, haply, it be in the acts of the nuporous Synod of Dort. For to a man of an erect judgment, and whose spirit hath more of God and of a man in it than to suffer itself to be yoked with prejudice or base partiality, reading and weighing some passages in the records of this synod, it cannot lightly but be a matter of some difficulty, and which will cost him some of his thoughts to resolve himself clearly what the resolutions of this synod were touching the extent of the gracious intentions of God in, or about the redemption purchased by Christ, at least in case these resolutions of theirs be only estimated by their expressions. Do not such sayings as these distinctly sound universal atonement by Christ? “God, commiserating *mankind* being fallen, sent his Son, who gave himself a price of redemption *for the sins of the whole world*.” And a little after: “Since that price which was *paid for all men*, and which will certainly benefit all that believe unto eternal life, yet doth not profit all men,” &c. Again: “So then *Christ died for all men, that all and every man* might, by the mediation of faith, through the virtue of this ransom, obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life.” I know no Remonstrant that holds more or otherwise in the point now under contest. Yet again they say, that “Christ by his death did not only found the evangelical covenant” between God and man, “but also obtained of his Father, that wheresoever this covenant should be preached, there should ordinarily such a measure of grace be administered” or given “with it which is sufficient to convince all impenitents and unbelievers of contempt or neglect, at least, in their non-performance of the condition.” Questionless if men be duly and sufficiently convinced, or be in capacity of this conviction, that negligence is, or was, the only reason or cause why such or such a thing is not, or was



not performed by them, it must be supposed that such men have, or had, sufficient strength or means to have performed it. For if men certainly know that they have not, or had not, a sufficiency of means or strength for the performance of a thing, it is impossible that they should ever be convinced that only negligence was the cause of their non-performance of it. The reason is, because a knowledge or persuasion that the performance of a thing is impossible, in respect of a man's weakness, or want of strength to perform it, is a certain cause of his non-attempting it, and consequently of his non-performing it. So that negligence in this case cannot be the only cause of his non-performance; nay, the truth is, that negligence is no cause hereof at all. Suppose a man doth neglect to try or to use means that he may fly like a bird in the air, yet this neglect of his cannot reasonably be looked upon as any cause of his not flying; but his inability to fly, in conjunction with a certain knowledge of such an inability in him, and of the invincibleness hereof, is the adequate and sole cause of his not flying.

The same synod elsewhere by other of its members expresseth itself thus, using the distinction of antecedent and consequent: without the knowledge whereof, the true state of the controversy in hand can hardly be understood. "But when we say," saith the synod, "that Christ died for believers and for his friends, this is to be understood *consequently*, so that the term" *i. e.* the event of his death; for what else they should mean by terminus, I understand not, "is hereby signified; as, on the contrary, he is said to have died *antecedently* for his enemies and unbelievers, (the word unbelief being taken negatively.)" "What the mystery of their meaning should be in these last words, wherein they restrain their sense in what they had said to a negative unbelief, is above the reach of my understanding. But when they say that Christ died consequently for believers, and antecedently for unbelievers, they speak the whole heart of their adversaries, the Remonstrants, touching the intentions of God in and about the death of Christ, as far as so few words can express it. For neither do they in any of their writings, that ever came in my way, anywhere affirm or say that Christ died consequently for unbelievers, *i. e.* with any such intention that unbelievers continuing such unto the end should be saved. And for such who, though unbelievers at present, yet shall afterwards repent and believe, these Synodians themselves will not deny but that Christ died consequently. Concerning the distinction of

antecedent and consequent, as it relates to the present controversy, we spake formerly. But how that assertion of the men we speak of, wherein they grant that “ Christ died antecedently for his enemies and unbelievers,” will find quarter at the hand of their own thesis, soon after subjoined, wherein they say that “Christ died *adequately* for all and *only the elect*,” I leave to themselves and their friends to consider. I speak it with all simplicity of heart, and without the least touch or tincture either of prejudice or partiality, (impressions to which I am far from being a debtor for any part of my contentment,) that to the best of my memory and understanding, I never met with a piece of discourse from the hand of any judicious or learned man fuller of broad and pregnant inconsistencies, than the decisions of this synod in the points cognizanced by them. Only the writings and preachings of men interested in the same principles with them I find deeply baptized into the same spirit of self-digladiation, whereof we shall, God willing, give instances by way of proof, to a sufficient proportion, before the close of this chapter.

Another member of the said synod, whose sentence and award in the controversies there agitated is, I suppose, synodical, (justified I mean, and approved by the body of the synod; otherwise no man can tell by the printed acts of this synod what the judgment hereof was, but only what was the judgment of the particular members thereof, in petty consorts apart by themselves, and not in conjunction with the entire body,) asserteth this position, that “there is a certain common philanthropy” or love of men “ in God towards all mankind being fallen, and he *seriously witteth*,” or hath willed, “ *the salvation of all men*.” Afterwards, speaking of the condemnation of those who believe not, he saith: “This event is not of itself intended by God, but follows by accident upon the default of man.” Afterwards: “If this redemption be not supposed as *a common benefit bestowed on mankind*, that general and promiscuous preaching of the gospel committed unto the apostles to be performed among all nations, will” be found to “have no true foundation.” And again: “How shall any necessity lie upon me to believe that such a benefit belongs unto me, which, though sufficient for me, yet was never truly intended for me?” Soon after he saith: “This redemption is the payment of a due” and valuable “price for us captives, not that we should come out of captivity after any manner,” *i. e.* simply or absolutely, “but *that we might* and ought to come out of it,” *i. e.* that we might come out upon our believing,

as himself immediately explaineth.

It were easy to produce many other assertions and positions from the Acts of this synod of like sense and import with these, and which are of a most notorious comportance with the sense and opinions of those men about the death of Christ, whose opinions, notwithstanding, they stigmatized as heterodox and erroneous, yea, and which stand at utter defiance with their own doctrines and sayings in other places. For if God “seriously willeth the salvation of all men;” if salvation be “a common benefit bestowed by God upon all men, and be truly intended for ” or unto “all men if God “gave his Son a price of redemption for the sins of the whole world;” (all which, with much more, we have heard and seen delivered and asserted by this synod;) how can it be true that “Christ died *adequately for all*, and only for *the elect*,” that Christ was “designed and given by the Father for a Mediator and head to a *certain number of men*,” that the “Father loved *only the elect*, and gave only these unto his Son to be redeemed by him ;” that “the application of the benefits of Christ declares for whom the impetration of them was;” that “God the Father ordained his Son Jesus Christ to be a Redeemer and propitiator for our sins, out of that love wherewith he particularly embraced his elect to eternal life?” with ten times more alike loudly dissonant from those former sayings. That notion of theirs which they oft repeat is; amongst many others, of very sad resentment viz. that, “though some men be willing, or should be willing, to believe, or to partake of redemption by Christ, yet God is not willing they should;” whereas the Scripture saith expressly, that “if there be first a willing mind, a man is accepted according to that which he hath, not according to that which he hath not ” 2 Cor. 8:12; that is, when a man is truly willing to do that which God requireth of him, hut wanteth either strength, means, or opportunity for the doing of it, and upon this account only doth it not, God doth not reject him, or punish him for not doing the thing, hut regards and rewards him for the uprightness of his heart, and the preparedness and readiness of his will to do it, in case means and opportunities were vouchsafed him. So that, doubtless, if a man be truly willing to be redeemed or saved by Christ, no want of strength, means, or opportunities, in one kind or other, for his salvation, shall hinder him from being saved, because he is in this case accepted (i. e. measured and estimated) by God according to the ability vouchsafed unto him, which extended only to the enabling of him

to work and bring his heart to a true willingness of being redeemed and saved by Christ, and which he hath with all faithfulness employed and improved accordingly ; and not according to any greater or further abilities, which haply are given unto others, but have been denied unto him. Now if God measures, judgeth, and esteemeth a man only “according to what he hath,” *i.e.* according only to what power, means, or opportunities he hath for the performance of what is righteous and just, in case any man hath gone as far in or towards the performance hereof as such power, means, and opportunities do enable him to go, he must needs find grace and favourable acceptance with God, yea, the same grace and acceptance, proportionably, which he should or could have found with him in case, with more power, means, and opportunities, he had gone further, and done more. And besides, that God should not be willing that a man should be redeemed and saved by Christ, when as the man himself is truly willing in this kind, is a saying of a notorious inconsistency with truth, considering that the willingness of any man in this kind must of necessity proceed from a willingness in God semblable to it. For “it is God that worketh” in men as well “to will” as “to do and doubtless he worketh not in any man to will that which is contrary to his own will. But this by the way.

How scant and narrow that covering is which the synod casteth over the nakedness of the pre-mentioned contradictions to hide it from the eyes of men; and likewise how inconsiderable, and unworthy men professing the knowledge of God and of the Scriptures, those reasons and arguments are by which they seek to establish their own opinion concerning the death of Christ, in opposition to the judgment of those whom they voted heterodox and erroneous, we shall, God willing, show and prove in the latter part of this discourse. In the mean time let us briefly consider what companions and friends we have, even amongst those of the reformed religion and Protestant party of men, in that great article of our faith which we have contended for hitherto, the gracious intentions of God towards all men without exception in the death of Christ and the redemption purchased thereby.

First, Concerning those whose judgments and consciences rather consorted with Luther’s doctrine than with Calvin’s, being upon this account distinguished by the name of Lutherans: these (more generally, and almost universally, at least as far as my inspection into their writings

informeth me), teach the doctrine of general redemption by Christ as orthodox and sound. I shall only insist upon a few passages from the writings of two or three known authors of the Lutheran persuasion, leading men in their way.

Melancthon, Luther's great associate, teacheth, that "*Every person of us apart ought to be firmly resolved of this, that we are pardoned and received by God; and that with this special or particular faith every particular man ought to apply the benefit of Christ to himself.*" Elsewhere he saith, that the "counsel of God was, that *mankind* should be redeemed;" and presently after asserteth the "love of God in his Son *towards mankind.*" In another place he affirmeth that "God poured out his wrath against the *sins of mankind,*" not of a few particular men, "upon his Son." A little after, speaking of Christ, he saith, "He feels a greater burden, viz. the wrath of God against the *sins of mankind,* which he knoweth to be poured out upon him. He sorrowed also," and was troubled, "that a great part of mankind would perish through a contempt of this" great "benefit of God" In another place he saith, "It is necessary to know that the gospel is an *universal promise, i. e.* that reconciliation" with God "is offered and promised to *all men.* This universal" promise "it is necessary to hold fast against" any "dangerous conceits about predestination, lest we fall to reason thus, that this promise belongeth to some few others, but doth not belong unto us. But let us be resolved of this, that the promise of the gospel is universal. For as the preaching of repentance is universal, so the preaching of remission of sins is universal also. But that all men do not obtain the promises of the gospel," *i. e.* the things here promised, "it ariseth from hence, that all men do not believe." The writings of this author have in them a large and full eye of that doctrine which hath been protected hitherto.

Chemnitius, another learned champion of the Lutheran faith, riseth up in his might, from place to place, to maintain the same doctrine. "The whole transaction," saith he, "of the Mediator is considerable in this, whether" God "the Father be willing to accept that satisfaction and obedience for the *whole world.* Now, this he declared most signally in this, that he left not his Son, whom he smote for the sins of *the people,* in death, but raised him up from the dead, and placed him at the right hand of his Majesty." Elsewhere he saith, "Lest therefore all mankind should perish for ever, that wonderful decree of the counsel of God concerning

the incarnation of the Son of God was enacted, that he, being our Mediator in our nature assumed without sin, should be made subject to the law for us, and should bear sin, the guilt of sin, the wrath of God, and *the punishments of the sins of the whole world*, being derived” or cast “upon him.” Again: “The Father did not pour out part of his wrath or of the curse, but his *whole wrath*, with all the dregs of the curse, into that cup which he gave unto his Son, the Mediator, to be drunk by him in his sufferings.” And presently after: “Christ, upon the cross, being about to commend his spirit unto his Father, saith, ‘It is finished;’ whereby he testifieth that all those things which were necessary for the expiation of sins, and for redemption from the curse of the law, were fully, sufficiently, and superabundantly consummated and discharged in” or by “his obedience and sufferings.” And that he doth not speak; this with particularity of respect to the sins or redemption of a few, or of the elect only, but simply and with reference to the sins and redemption of all men, appears, 1. From the clear drift and purport of the discourse in hand, which was to prove, against his Tridentine antagonists, that Christ, in and at his death, left nothing unperformed that was necessary or required, viz. by way of satisfaction, of any person whatsoever, for his redemption or for the expiation of his sins; the sense and doctrine of his adversaries being, that indulgencies or satisfactory performances by those yet living, were available, not only for the elect being in purgatory, (for they no where appropriate this element unto them,) but for any or all without exception, which, according to the notion of their faith, were sent thither for want of a complete satisfaction made for their sins. 2. Soon after, in progress of the same discourse, he citeth this from the apostle, “Unus pro omnibus mortuus est— one died for *all men*,” 2 Cor. 5:14; and from another apostle this, “Si quis peccaverit,” &c., “If any man sin, we have an Advocate,” &c.; “and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the *whole world*,” 1 John 2:2. 3. There is not the least insinuation in the said passages of any limitation or restriction intended by him to the elect or their sins only. 4, and lastly, The general sense of the latter passages is fairly and fully comportant both with the express tenor of the former, and, indeed, with the judgment of the author in other parts of his writings, where he hath occasion to declare his sense in the point.

Luther himself led them into the way of the same doctrine, though,

haply, he did not walk so uniformly or steadily in it as they did. "Christ," saith he, "is slain before," or in the sight of "the world, is condemned, goes down into hell," or into the grave. "But before God he is the salvation of *the whole world*, from the beginning to the end of it." In another place, "The sins of the *whole world*, which are committed from the first man to the last day thereof, lie upon the back of that one man who was born of Mary." Elsewhere, "We all fell in," or by, "the fall of Adam, our first parent, and *this fall* must be recovered by Christ, viz., by his ignominy, shame, reproach, and death," &c. If Adam's fall, wherein all men without exception fell, be recovered or restored by Christ, all that fell thereby must needs be recovered or restored by him. If only the elect, so called, be recovered, this is no recovery of Adam's fall, but only of a small or less considerable part of it, or rather of some few persons only who fell thereby. The same author in another place saith that Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, writes, "That God promised by his prophets in the holy Scripture, the gospel concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord namely, that all men should be saved by him, according to that which was said to Abraham, Gen. 22. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," &c. And afterwards, "Christ from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, remains the same, by whom all men are *together*," or alike "saved." Elsewhere, this author affirms the grace of God to be "*toti orbi communis*," "common to the whole world;" and again he affirms that Christ is "*Yita et lux omnium hominum*," *i. e.* the life and light of all men; to omit many other passages of like import that might readily be drawn together out of the writings of this noble champion of the Protestant faith. So that there is little question but that the Lutheran party of the Reformed religion do more generally, if not wholly and entirely, for I want the opportunity of books to inform me concerning the respective judgments of them all, accord with us in the generality of redemption purchased by Christ.

For the finishing of the chapter in hand, and, upon the matter, of this first part of our discourse, it remaineth only that I desire the impartial reader seriously, and as in the presence of God, to consider whether the testimonies and sayings which shall be presented unto him, in the remaining part of this chapter, out of the writings of Calvin, and some other principal men that are generally looked upon as followers of his doctrine, and, consequently, as adversaries to the great doctrine of

universal redemption maintained in this discourse, whether, I say, these testimonies and sayings do not evince above and beyond all contradiction, that these men were not so thorough, uniform, settled, or consistent with themselves in their judgments about the doctrine of redemption as men had need be, whose authority and judgments are commonly taken for the standard of other men's faith, and judged little less than equal to the foundations of the prophets and apostles themselves, in matters of religion. Certain I am that the frequent and notorious inconsistencies that occur in their writings about the great article of the Christian faith, so much argued and debated in our present discourse, have ministered an unhappy advantage to some of our adversaries of the synagogue of Rome, to elevate and expose to contempt the credit, worth, learning, authority, of the principal supporters and defenders of the Protestant religion. I speak not those things, nor shall I speak any thing, God willing, at any time, to the undervaluing of the learning, parts, labour, faithfulness, signal serviceableness of these men to the Christian churches in their generations. I acknowledge that many of them equalized both in all intellectual and moral accomplishments and endowments, the best of the fathers, so called, of old. The only prize that we run for in the present race is, so far to reduce and temper their esteem and authority with us, that on the one hand, what was worthy, and of God, in them, may turn to a happy account unto us, and bless us ; and on the other hand, that what was weak, and of men, in them, may not ensnare us, or balance the spiritual commodity accruing to us from what was honourable and beneficent in them, with loss and disadvantage.

I begin with Calvin himself, and humbly desire those that oppose his judgment and authority to obstruct the course of the doctrine avouched in this discourse, lest it should "run and be glorified" as truth ought to be, to consider whether these passages and sayings next ensuing be with it and for it, or against it. "Although," saith he, "there is nothing to be found in the world worthy the favour of God, yet he sheweth himself propitious" or favourable "*unto the whole world*, in that he calls *all men without exception* to believe in Christ, which is nothing else but an entrance into life;" with more to like purpose transcribed Chap. 5. p. 142, of this discourse. Certainly if God's railing of all men without exception to believe in Christ be a sufficient argument or sign of his propitious and favourable inclination towards them, he must needs really intend the



grace or good of salvation unto them ; otherwise his calling of them to believe, as, namely, if it should be accompanied with a purpose or intent in him, either simply to destroy them, or to increase their destruction, would rather argue his hatred than any propitiousness of affection towards them. And if God intends the salvation of all men without exception, certainly he hath provided salvation in Christ for them all. Elsewhere the same author saith, that “Although Christ suffered for the sins of the *whole world*, and be through the *kindness* or good will “*of God indifferently offered unto all men*, yet all men do not receive” or take hold on “him.” See this, and much more cited from him of like notion, Chap. 6. p. 176. In another place he discourseth thus : “Inasmuch as the utmost end of a blessed life standeth in the knowledge of God, that the entrance” or access “unto blessedness might not be shut up against *any man*, God hath not only implanted in the minds of men that which we call the seed of religion, but hath also manifested himself in the whole fabric” or workmanship “of the world after such a manner, and offers himself daily so plainly” or openly unto men “that they cannot open their eyes, but they must needs behold him.” If God provideth that the passage or way unto happiness may be open for every man or, which is the same, obstructed or shut up against no man, doubtless there is happiness, and consequently salvation, provided in, or procured by Christ for every man. For there is no way or access for any man unto happiness but by Christ; no, nor yet by Christ himself except only for those whose sins are atoned by him. Of like import with the former is that saying also: “The fuller and more comprehensive sense is this, that God was in Christ; and then, that by his intercession he reconciled *the world* unto himself.” Questionless if an expositor of Scripture meets with a figurative term or expression, I mean so apprehended by him, in the text which is before him, and which he is about to open, it is very improper for him to use the same word in the same figurative or improper sense in his exposition, especially without giving any notice of the figurativeness of it, or substituting a word of a more plain and ready signification for the explaining of it. Therefore, if Calvin, by the word “world,” 2 Cor. 5:19, understood the elect of God only, dispersed up and down the world, he would not in his exposition have used the same word to express them, especially without the help of some other, one or more, of a more plain and known signification in that kind. So that there is not the least question but that he, both in the text

mentioned, as likewise in his Commentaries upon it, understood the word "world," in the ordinary and best known signification of it, *i. e.* for the generality or universality of men. Upon the same Scripture afterwards he demands, "For what purpose did God appear unto men in Christ?" He answereth and saith, "For reconciliation, that enmities being taken out of the way, *those that were estranged*" from him "might be adopted for sons." Now they that were estranged from God were not the elect only, but the whole universe of mankind with them. Therefore according to the express import of this piece of commentary, God designed in Christ the adoption of all men without exception for sons. Nor doth he any whit less than confirm the same doctrine in saying, that "As by the offence of one Adam, judgment or guilt came upon all men to condemnation : so by the righteousness of one Jesus Christ, the gift or benefit of God abounded unto *all men to the justification of life.*" He speaketh likewise to the heart of the cause we plead, when he termeth that saying of the apostle, 1 Cor. 8:11, "A memorable saying, whereby we are taught of how great an account the salvation of the brethren ought to be with us; and not only the salvation of them altogether, but of every one of them apart, inasmuch as the blood of Christ was shed *for every one* of them." By "brethren," it is evident that he cannot mean only such who are elect, or predestinated unto salvation. 1. Because he speaks of all that profess Christianity, or that are members of any Christian church, amongst whom it is the known judgment of this author that there still are many hypocrites, and such who will not in fine be saved. 2. The elect, in his sense, I mean such who come at last to be actually saved, cannot be certainly known or discerned from others beforehand. Therefore this consideration, that Christ hath shed his blood for a man, can be no argument or motive at all unto me to regard his salvation the more, since it is impossible for me to know whether Christ hath shed his blood for him or no. His meaning then, when he saith that the blood of Christ was shed for every particular person of the brethren, must needs be that it was shed as well for those who will not be saved by it as for those that will. See before upon this account, Chap. 8. p. 191. And doth he not yet further plead the cause of the same doctrine with us when he saith, that "Since Christ will have the benefit of his death *common unto all men*, they do him wrong" or are injurious unto him "who by any opinion of theirs, restrain" or keep back "*any man* from the hope of salvation?" Take

this passage of his also into the account: "This is a marvellous love" of his "towards mankind, that he is willing to have *all men saved*, yea, and is ready to gather into salvation such as are perishing of their own accord. But the order here is to be observed, viz. that God is ready" or prepared "to receive all men unto" or upon "repentance, *lest any man* should perish." In the heads of accord between him and the ministers of the Tigurine church, about the Sacrament, he saith, speaking of Christ, that "He is to be considered as a sacrifice of expiation, by which God is appeased" or pacified "towards *the world*." In the Geneva Catechism, he teacheth all those that are to be catechised to look upon Christ as "*salutem mundi*," "*the salvation of the world*," yea, and to own him and believe in him, "as their surety, who hath undergone that judgment which they deserved, that he might render them free from guilt ;" with much more of like consideration. So that unless it be supposed, that Christ died for all such persons without exception, who should be persuaded and brought to learn and use this catechism, it will apparently follow, that the composer of it, and all parents and others that shall put their children or other persons upon the learning and pronouncing the words hereof, shall put them upon the speaking and professing those things, and that as matters of their Christian faith, of the truth whereof they have no sufficient ground or assurance; yea, and which are much more likely to be false than true. For if Christ died for the elect only, *i. e.* only for such who in the event will be saved, these being but few, in comparison of those who will perish, evident it is, that, speaking of particular persons before they believe savingly, or to justification, it is more likely they will perish than that they will be saved; or, however, there is no sufficient ground to judge of them, or of any particular person of them by name, before they believe, that they are elected ; or, consequently, that Christ was their surety, or died to free them from the guilt of sin. And if so, then they that are taught to say and profess, as an article of their Christian faith, that Christ died to save them, are put upon it, or tempted to profess that, as an article of their religion, which they have no rational or competent ground to believe to be so much as a truth. Yea, the clear truth is, that the opinion, which denieth the redemption of all men, without exception, by Christ, putteth all our ordinary catechisms to rebuke, as being snares and temptations upon all, or the greatest part of those who use them, to pretend a belief or confident persuasion of such

a thing, which they have more cause to suspect for an error than to embrace as a truth. This by the way. If the reader, to those passages lately insisted upon from the undoubted writings of Mr. Calvin, will please to add those other, from the same pen, formerly mentioned, which, though produced, haply, upon somewhat a more particular occasion respectively, yet speak, for substance, the same thing, he will, I presume, acknowledge, that which hath in effect been already said, that Calvin was not so far an enemy to general redemption, hut that, without straining either his judgment or conscience, he did upon all occasions reconcile himself unto it, yea, and bottomed many carriages and passages of discourse upon it.

I was desirous to present the reader with the more variety, and greater number of testimonies from Calvin, wherein he plainly asserteth the doctrine of universal atonement, because he is generally notioned as a man clearest and most resolved in his judgment against it. I shall be more sparing in citations of a like import from others, who pass in common discourse as professed enemies, also, against the same doctrine: but whether they be so indeed, methinks these sayings following, with many more of a like inspiration, that might be added unto them, should put to a demurrer. “So God loved the world,” &c. “By world,” saith Musculus, “he understands universal mankind,” &c. In another place:

“After the same manner,” he saith, “it is in this redemption of mankind, whereof we speak: that reprobates and men deplorably” or desperately “wicked, do not receive it, neither comes to pass through any defect of the grace of God, nor is it meet that for the sons of perdition’s sake, that it should lose the glory and title of a universal redemption, inasmuch as it is prepared for all, and all are called unto it.” Elsewhere he saith, “Christ died not for his friends alone, but for his enemies also: *not for some men only, but for all men*. This is the immense latitude” or compass “of the love of God.” I know not how a man can express his sense for universal redemption, though he should abound in it never so much, in words more significant and distinct. These passages, with many others like unto them, have been formerly cited from this author.

Peter Martyr hath these sayings: “His will was,” speaking of God, “that it should he well *with all men*, and that one only should in the mean time suffer.” Again, “It was meet that for our redemption some good thing should be offered unto God, which should equally, or rather more, please him, than all the sins of the world had displeased him.” In another place,

he readily granteth, that God, with that will which is called his “antecedent will, willeth that all men should he saved which is the express notion and sense wherein we declared our judgment in the point of universal redemption by Christ. Elsewhere he produceth this Scripture, “God will have all men to he saved,” to prove that God is not the author of sin in the world, and upon this account argueth thus: “If God will have men saved, then he useth good means, and doth not stir them up to sin: for sin brings men to destruction.” If his sense were, that God willeth only that the elect should he saved, then, notwithstanding this argument, God might be the author of all the sins in the world that are committed by far the greatest part of men, viz. by all those that are not elected; which, doubtless, was as far from his mind as it is from truth. Por if God’s will that men should he saved, he a reason to prove that he inclineth not men unto sin, the probatory force of it in this kind can extend no further, than to such men only whom he willeth should be saved.

Bucer, if there were any agreement between his judgment and his words, was as full and thorough for general redemption as any man. “Whereas,” saith he, “the world was lost” or, undone “ by one sin of Adam, the grace of Christ did not only abolish this sin and that death which it brought” upon the world, “but likewise took away *an infinite number of other sins which we the rest of men have added* to that first sin.” Afterwards, “ If we consider that every particular man by his transgressions increaseth the misery of mankind, and that whosoever sinneth doth no less hurt his posterity than Adam did all men, it is a plain case, that the *grace of Christ hath removed more evils from men than the sin of Adam brought* upon them: for though there he no sin committed in all the world, which hath not its original from that first sin of Adam, yet all particular men who sin, as they sin voluntarily and freely, so do they make an addition to their own proper guilt and misery: *all which evils* since the alone *benefit of Christ hath taken away*, it must needs be that it hath taken away the sins of many, and not of one only. Manifest therefore it is, that more evils have been removed by Christ than were brought in by Adam.” And yet further this author saith, “As by the fall of one sin prevailed over all, so as to make all liable unto condemnation: so, likewise, the righteousness of one so far took place on the behalf of *all men*, that *all men* may obtain the justification of life hereby.” He that converseth much with the writings of other late

Protestant authors, (such I mean to whom the lot is fallen of being esteemed orthodox,) shall, upon a little observation, ever and anon find them borrowing this principle of their adversaries, that Christ died for all men, to support and strengthen their buildings, being, indeed, a principle so necessary that in many cases men can make no tolerable work without it. I may, I suppose, without prejudice or loss in the least to the cause we have undertaken, supersede the multiplication of instances from other authors of the same persuasion and repute with those last named, whereby it would appear as clear as the light at noon-day, that there are few of them, if any, but that now and then do homage with their pen to that great and sovereign truth of universal atonement by Christ. I shall therefore conclude with some single testimonies from several men, leaving the reader to pursue his satisfaction concerning the rest by his own reading.

Pareus, writing upon that of the apostle, “That he through the grace of God should taste of death for every man,” saith, that “whereas he saith, ‘for every man,’ it respecteth the amplification” or extent “of the death of Christ. *He died not for some few; the efficacy*” or virtue “*of it appertains unto all*. Therefore there is life prepared in the death of Christ for *all* afflicted consciences.”

Gualter, preaching upon John 3:16, and speaking of Christ, saith, that “he being to name those whom God so loved, doth not mention Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, Moses, David, the prophets, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or holy martyrs, but *the world, which* our evangelist affirmeth to *lie wholly in wickedness*, and *of which* Christ himself more than once affirmeth *the devil to be prince*.”

Hemmingius, in his book of Christian Institution, hath this saying, amongst many others of like import: “There is no reason why any man should think that the Son” of God “was sent into the world that he might” or should “*redeem, some certain select persons* out of mankind, hut rather that he should take away *the sins of the whole world*.”

Ursine, in his Catechetical Explications, discourseth thus: “As then Christ died for all men in respect of the sufficiency of his ransom, in respect of the efficiency of it only for those that believe, so also he was willing to die for *all men in common*, as to the sufficiency of his merit; that is, *his will was to merit* by his death,” and this “most sufficiently,” i.e. abundantly, “*grace, righteousness, life, for all men*, because he would

have nothing wanting in him, or in his merit, that should render wicked men who perish inexcusable.” We formerly proved, that if Christ died sufficiently for all men, he died intentionally also for all upon which account, amongst all our opposers, we found only Piscator and Beza true to their principles, who as well deny that Christ died sufficiently as efficaciously, or intentionally, for all men. But if Christ “merited,” *i. e.* purchased or procured, “by his death, grace, righteousness, life, most sufficiently for all men,” and this so or with such an intent, “that nothing might be wanting in his merit to make those that perish, inexcusable,” doubtless he merited as much for those who perish as for those that are saved, and consequently died as efficaciously for the one as for the other. For what did he, or could he, merit more for those who come to be saved than “grace righteousness, life,” and this most sufficiently ? Nor could he merit less for those who perish, to make them inexcusable, than such a sufficiency of grace, by the co-operation and assistance whereof they might have believed, as was sufficiently proved in the next preceding chapter.

Aretius, upon ver. 15 of the second chapter to the Hebrews, willett us to “observe to whom the fruit” or benefit “of the death of Christ belongeth, and in what the deliverance which the apostle speaks of consists. This deliverance,” saith he, “appertains unto all that were subject unto bondage in this life. Now we were all thus subject; therefore *the deliverance appertains unto all*. The deliverance is said to be general, or appertaining unto all men, because *it appertains unto all*” or whole “mankind, although all do not acknowledge the benefit, nor receive it with a thankful mind. Thus it comes to pass that the said deliverance comes to be” eventually “efficacious in believers only.”

J. Fox, our countryman, in his Meditations upon the Apocalypse, hath this passage, amongst many others of a concurrent sense and notion: “The Lord Christ then came into the world, being sent by his Father. And wherefore was he sent? That he might repair the losses which *nature*,” he means the nature of man, “had sustained. For the Lord, seeing the miserable and lost condition of our infirmity, so prone unto evil by an innate frailty, so loved *the world*, that of his own accord he bestowed his only begotten Son” upon it, “who might relieve the frailty” thereof, “change” or turn “death into salvation, pacify the wrath” conceived against it “in heaven,” &c. The condition of the elect, or of believers, was

not miserable, or however not the condition of these only. Therefore, this author, in saying that “the Lord so loved the world, that he voluntarily bestowed,” &c., could not, by “the world,” mean such only, elect, or believers, but the generality of mankind, the condition of all which was equally “lost and miserable,” and who are frequently signified and expressed by the word “world.”

Lavater, preaching with his pen upon the prophet Ezekiel, teacheth the doctrine asserted by us in words to this effect: “Some say, I could willingly die, but that the greatness of my sins maketh me afraid of death. The minds” or consciences of these men “are to be raised with this consolation, that we know that God hath laid our sins upon Christ, so that he hath made satisfaction upon the cross for us all.” To a person troubled or dismayed with the fear of death through the greatness of his sins, it is a very faint consolation to understand or consider that God hath laid the sins of some few men upon Christ, or that he hath made satisfaction for the elect, or for those that believe, one main ground of his trouble or fear being whether he be of the number either of the one or the other. Therefore, doubtless, the author’s sense in the passage was, that Christ hath made satisfaction upon the cross for all men without exception.

Chamier, as solemnly engaged an adversary against the opinion of general redemption as any, yet so far befriendeth the truth at unawares as to say that “the righteousness of Christ is common for the saving of *all men* unto eternal life.”

Mr. Perkins is known to have been very deeply also baptized into the same spirit of opposition to us in the present controversy, yet I find these words cited from him, (for I have not, I confess, as yet found them in the tract itself out of which they are cited: “very person in the church, by virtue of this command of God, ‘Believe the gospel,’ is bound to believe that he is redeemed by Christ, as well reprobates as elect, though in a different consideration,” &c. These words I so much the rather believe are to be found in this author (though, as I now said, I have not yet met with them here) because I find the same words in effect, and not much differing in form, in other writers, partakers of the same apprehensions with him in the subject-matter in hand. For,

Zanchius expresseth himself to the same point thus: “As *every one* is commanded” by God “to believe, and this with a proper and singular faith, that Christ died for him, and that his sins are expiated by the death



and blood of Christ, that his sins are pardoned for Christ's sake,—that he is justified in" or by "Christ; so he is bound also to be fully persuaded" in himself "that he was long before, as viz. before the foundation of the world, chosen in Christ, and predestinated to the participation of these benefits, &c. Such sayings as these from men who professedly stand declared in their judgments for such a personal and particular redemption which excludeth the far greatest number of men from part or fellowship in it, are unto me, though no hard interpreter either of men's words or actions, of an interpretation of no good accord with the honour of their authors.

Bullinger, in his writings, frequently riseth up in confirmation of what his fellows sometimes affirm in the behalf of the doctrine of our present contest. Amongst other passages of this interest, I read words to this purpose: "It remains then an indubitable truth, that the Lord Christ is a full propitiation, satisfaction, offering, and sacrifice for the sins, for the punishment, (I say,) and for the fault" or delinquency "*of the whole world.*"

J. Jacohus Grynaesus numbereth him amongst his "orthodoxographers," (*i. e.* his orthodox and sound writers,) who reasoned thus against the Pelagian heretics, who denied that Christ died for all men: "If it were so, how could the apostle say, that as in Adam all die, so in Christ *all* shall be made alive?" yea, and saith withal, that "the catholic church utterly detests that opinion which denieth that Christ assumed the nature of man for all men, and that he died for all men."

Dr. John Davenant, an eminent member of the Synod of Dort, instead of an answer to this argument of his adversaries against justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ: "If the righteousness of Christ, which is the general price of the redemption of all men, he imputed to us, then we may truly be called the redeemers or saviours of the world," replieth thus: "The righteousness of Christ then is not imputed" for example "unto Peter, as" or as it is "the general *price of redemption for all men*, but as the price wherewith his soul is redeemed in particular." In which words he plainly enough supposeth the said righteousness of Christ to be a general price for the redemption of all men.

Kimedontius, a great professor of the way and doctrine of Calvin in the present controversies, yet complains of those, as "injurious to him and his party, and no better than false witnesses, who clamour against them as if

they denied that Christ died for *all men*, and was not the propitiation for the sins of the whole *world*."

Because I would not overcharge the reader's patience above measure, I shall omit the Catechisms and Confessions of many Reformed churches, as of the Palatinate, Bern, Basil, Tigurum, Schaffhusen, with divers others, in which there are very plain and pregnant assertions of the doctrine of universal atonement by Christ; and shall conclude the demonstration of what we lately observed, (viz. that the doctrine of general redemption is a principle or notion of that sovereign use and necessity, that the professed enemies thereof cannot forbear it, or make any rational earnings in many their theological discourses without it,) with a passage or Testimony from no fewer than fifty-two ministers of the city of London, and these non de plebe virtim, which I find in a small pamphlet lately subscribed and published by them, and that for this very end, as themselves profess, to give Testimony against errors and heresies. In this their Testimony, bewailing the prevailing of errors and heresies, so by them called, they bemoan the case of many of those, whom yet otherwhile they judge the happiest men in the world, (those I mean for whom Christ died,) thus: "Thousands and ten thousands of poor souls, which Christ hath ransomed with his blood, shall hereby be betrayed, seduced, and endangered to be undone to all eternity." No sense, rationality, or truth can be made of this saying, but by the mediation of this hypothesis or ground, viz. that such persons who have been ransomed with the blood of Christ" may be "undone" (*i. e.* perish) for ever. For whatsoever men may be brought into "danger" of suffering, doubtless there is a possibility, at least, that they may suffer, as we have reasoned the case further elsewhere, where also we put to rebuke that distinction of a possibility in respect of second causes, and in respect of the first cause or decree of God, evincing from express grounds of Scripture truth in this assertion, That "there is not the least danger of suffering inconvenience by any such means or causes, how likely or threatening soever, in themselves simply considered, to bring the inconvenience upon us, which we know to be thoroughly mated and over-balanced by means and causes of a contrary tendency and import." I here add, that should the meaning of the authors of the said passage be, that those "ransomed with the blood of Christ" are "endangered" in respect of second causes or means only, but are in the mean time perfectly secured

by God, or his decree, from suffering the danger, there had been no such cause of taking up that most solemn and pathetic lamentation over them which they do, but rather of rejoicing on their behalf, that being so “ransomed,” they are in no danger or possibility, through any “betraying” or “seduction” by any error or heresy whatsoever, of losing that grace or blessing of salvation which was purchased by the blood of Christ for them.

I shall not, I trust, need here to reinculcate that which hath been, and this more than once, so plainly expressed formerly, viz. that my intent in citing Calvin, with those other late Protestant writers which we have subjoined in the same suffrage of doctrine unto him, in favour of the doctrine of general redemption, is not to persuade the reader, that the habitual or standing judgment either of him, or of the greater part of the rest, was whole and entire for the said doctrine, or stood in any great propension hereunto, (though this I verily believe concerning sundry of them;) much less to imply that they never, in other places of their writings, declared themselves against it; but only to show, 1, That the truth of this doctrine is so near at hand; and, 2, That the influence of it is so benign and accommodations unto many other truths and doctrines in Christian religion, that it is a hard matter for those that deal much in these affairs not to assume and assert it ever and anon, and to speak and argue many things upon the account of the authority of it; yea, though “*extra casum necessitatis*” on the one hand, and “*incogitantias*” on the other hand, they are Wont to behold it, as God doth proud men, “afar off.”

Let us draw up the sum total of the chapter, in a very few words, and so end it. First, we have seen the roots of that doctrine held forth in our present discourse, thoroughly watered with the fairest streams of the judgment, learning, approbation, and authority of the primitive times. Secondly, concerning times of a later date, we have found that the judgment and faith of that party of Protestant churches and writers which is known by the name of Lutheran, do more generally, if not universally, accord with the same doctrine. Thirdly, and lastly, that the other party of these churches and writers, viz. those who incline more to the sense and judgment of Calvin in matters of Christian concernment, together with Calvin himself, doth very frequently attest the same doctrine, yea, and cannot well want the service and assistance of it in the managing and

carrying on many of their affairs. The result of all is, that no considering or conscientious person whatsoever hath the least occasion to decline, or keep aloof off in judgment, from the said doctrine for want of company, so great a number, as we have seen, of the best and most desirable, for companions in the way of faith, of those that have dwelt with flesh and blood since the apostles' days, having given the right hand of fellowship unto it in their respective generations.

## CHAPTER 20.

**The Conclusion: exhibiting a general proposal, or survey, of matters intended for consideration, explication, and debate, in the second part of this work.**

THOUGH Christ the Lord reigneth, whilst his enemies are yet unsubdued, and not put under his feet, yet he reigneth not so like unto himself, nor with that peaceableness or desirableness of government unto his subjects, as he shall and will reign, at least in the glorious result of his mediation, when all that which in any degree opposeth him in his government shall be wholly taken out of the way, and no enemy left with any strength or power to infest, trouble, or cause the least disquietment or discontent in all his kingdom. In like manner, though the judgment and conscience of a man may reign with much contentment and satisfaction, in the holding and profession of many a truth, by the demonstrative evidence and strength of such arguments and grounds upon which he clearly seeth it built; however he may see it also encompassed and assaulted on every side with such objections and difficulties which are not at present subdued under him; yet can they not be so well apayed, so full of peace and joy in this their kingdom, as they may and will when these objections shall be made to bow down before them, and lick the dust at their feet, and all difficulties be perfectly reconciled with that truth which they hold and profess in this kind. Upon this account, having in the precedence of our discourse settled this great doctrine, that “ Christ gave himself a ransom for all men, without exception,” upon such pillars of Scripture, reason, and authority, that no man that shall duly weigh the premises can reasonably question the truth thereof; I judged it necessary, nevertheless, (God not laying my intentions in the dust by the hand of death or otherwise,) to subjoin the vindication of the said doctrine, from all such objections, exceptions, or encumbrances, wherewith I find it on every side oppugned, and the course of it much obstructed in the minds and judgments of some: that so they who are or shall be persuaded of the truth of it, may sit with so much the more ease in their judgments, and reign in the happy contemplation and enjoyment of so blessed a truth, with so much the more peace and

joy.

In our intended vindication of the said doctrine, or second part of this work, we shall, God graciously continuing his assistance perform these three things. First, We shall deliver those texts and contexts of Scripture, which, contrary to their minds and native tendencies and imports respectively, are compelled to serve against the said doctrine, these, I say, we shall, in the first place deliver from this hard service, by loosing the bands of such interpretations, wherein they are detained upon that account. Secondly, We shall show, how the supposed iron and steel of such grounds, arguments and reasonings, wherewith the said doctrine commonly is assaulted, are “turned into stubble and rotten wood” before it. Thirdly and lastly, We shall give some general and brief answer to such passages and sayings, which are usually alleged and cited from the ancient writers, in way of opposition to this doctrine. Concerning the Scriptures, which are commonly pressed to serve in that warfare we speak of, the truth is, that, as notice hath been formerly given, there is none of them can be brought to speak any thing at all, no, not in appearance, against the doctrine we plead, but only by the mediation of some deduction or inference raised and drawn from them by the reasons of men. There is no Scripture that hath yet been or indeed can be produced, wherein it is either affirmed, that Christ died only for the elect, only for believers, or the like; or denied, that he died for all men without exception. The particular places which are commonly managed with greatest confidence in the actors, and with most applause in the spectators, against the said doctrine, are these:

Matt. 20:28. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Unto which several others of like phrase and expression, are wont to be added, as, viz. Matt. 26:28, Rom. 5:15, 19, Heb. 9:28, &c. From these Scriptures, with their fellows, such an argument as this is levied:

“He that gave his life a ransom for many, shed his blood for many for the remission of sins, made many righteous, &c., did not give his life a ransom for all, did not shed his blood for all for the remission of sins, &c.: But Christ gave his life a ransom for many, shed his blood for many, &c.: Ergo.” John 10:11. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep and verse 15, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” To these also other passages of somewhat a like import are frequently joined. As

Eph. 5:25, where Christ is said to “have loved his church, and to have given himself for it,” &c. From such premises as these, this inference or conclusion is much solicited: “Ergo, Christ gave his life for his sheep,” *i. e.* his elect, “only; gave himself for his church only,” &c.

Matt. 1:21. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” This text likewise is wont to be seconded with some others as sembling with it, as Acts 10:43,— “ that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.” So also Rom. 3:25, and 10:4, Heb. 5:9, &c. Upon these and such like foundations, this inference is built: “Ergo, Christ came to save his people only, believers only, sanctified ones only, from their sins.”

John 15:13. “Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend.” This I find paralleled and strengthened with these words from the same pen, 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” This pair of Scriptures afford unto some the joy of this consequence: “Ergo, Christ did not lay down his life for reprobates, or for those that are damned in hell, because then he should love them with the greatest love that could be.”

John 17:9. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world.” Upon this basis, this enthymeme is raised: “Christ refused to pray for the world,” *i. e.* the wicked of the world: “Ergo, certainly he refused to die for the world.”

Rom. 8:32. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” From hence the doctrine of particular redemption is countenanced with this argument. “Unto all those for whom God spared not, but delivered up his own Son for them, he will freely give all things: But there are many thousands in the world unto whom God will not give all things: Ergo, for none of these did God deliver up his Son.”

As to these arguments and deductions pretending legitimacy of descent from the recited Scriptures respectively, we shall clearly demonstrate the nullity of such their claim, and prove that they have neither footing nor foundation in any the premises. But,

Secondly, Besides the recited pleas against the doctrine of general redemption, claiming such an immediate interest as hath been represented, in the Scriptures, there are many others seemingly confederate with some unquestionable principles and grounds both of reason and religion, and bearing themselves upon the Scriptures also,

though in somewhat a more remote way. The most considerable, and those insisted upon with greatest importunity by the adversaries of the said doctrine, are these following. Such of them as I find in the writings of men of worth and name, I shall set down, with their respective authors, or abettors, noted in the margin.

*1st Reason against general redemption.* “If Christ, by his death merited for us,” *i. e.* for those for whom he died, “the reconciliation itself of our persons with God, and that grace should actually and really be communicated unto us, which if he should not have done, he should not have benefited those that are his to such a degree, as Adam damnified those that are his, then did he not die for all men without exception.” But the antecedent is true: therefore the consequent also. The reason of the consequence in the proposition is, because certain it is, both from the Scriptures, and by experience, that the persons of all men are not truly reconciled with God: nor is grace actually communicated unto them. The minor presumeth of itself.

*2nd Reason.* “If salvation, being the thing promised in the new covenant, be not promised but only upon condition of believing, and all men do not, will not, believe, then certain it is that Christ by his death obtained not salvation for all men, but for believers only.” But the former of these is true: therefore the latter also. The consequence in the proposition is presumed to be undeniable.

*3rd Reason.* “If the death of Christ procured restitution unto life for all men, then were all men restored hereunto, either when Christ from eternity was destinated unto death, which must needs be false, because then no man should be born a child of wrath, nor should original sin hurt any man, inasmuch as this, according to such an opinion, should have been pardoned from eternity: nor should infants or others stand in need of the laver of regeneration, which is contrary to the assertion of Christ, John 3:5 : or else they were restored in the person of their first parent, when the promise concerning the seed of the woman *was* promised, which also is false ; because our first parents themselves were not restored to an estate of grace but by faith in Christ; therefore, neither their posterity, and so not all, whether believers or unbelievers: or else they were restored when Christ himself suffered death upon the cross; but this also is false: for so none should have been restored before this moment of time, which no man holdeth: nor are all men restored since



this time, for without all doubt the wrath of God burned at the same instant of time and afterwards, against some of the accusers, condemners, crucifiers, and mockers of Christ.”

*4<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “If the impetration and application of the benefits of Christ be never separated, or disjoined in their subjects, then did he not impetrate these benefits for all men, (and consequently not die for all men,) because certain it is, that there is not an application of them made unto all men: But the impetration and application of these benefits are never separated the one from the other in their subjects: Ergo.”

*5<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “They for whom Christ by his death actually procured and obtained reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life, are made real partakers of these benefits: the reason is, because nothing can be said to be procured and obtained by Christ for any man, which at one time or other he doth not partake and enjoy: But unbelievers who perish eternally, never come to be partakers of these benefits, reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, &c.: Ergo.”

*6<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “They who by the death of Christ are reconciled unto God, are saved by his life. This proposition beareth itself upon the authority of Rom. 5:10. But not all men, but only the elect and believers are saved by the life of Christ: Ergo.”

*7<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “Those unto whom Christ was not ordained or given for a mediator, he did not reconcile unto his Father by his death, nor purchase remission of sins, or eternal life for them: But Christ was not ordained or given for a mediator unto reprobates persevering in unbelief, &c.: Ergo.” The assumption presumeth to lean on the breast of Rom. 8:32, a place already specified upon a like account.

*8<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “If reconciliation with God, remission of sins, and eternal life, be obtained for all men without exception by the sufferings and death of Christ, then it will follow that all those who have not by actual incredulity rejected the merits of Christ, remain truly reconciled unto God, have their sins remitted, and shall be eternally saved.” But this consequent is absurd: therefore the antecedent also.

*9<sup>th</sup> Reason.* “If Christ by his death made satisfaction for all men, then might all men, upon the performance of the condition of the new covenant be saved; and again upon an universal non-performance of this condition all men might be damned : But as well the one as the other of these, are and were impossible: Ergo.” The reason of the consequence (as

to the first branch of it) is, because satisfaction being made for any man's sins, there remains nothing further necessary to his actual discharge or salvation, but only the performance of the condition, upon which the application of the said satisfaction is suspended. The reason of the latter branch of the consequence is, because if satisfaction was made by Christ upon none other terms for some than it was for all, it clearly follows, that in case there be a possibility of a non-application of it unto some, there is a like possibility unto all: and consequently, a possibility of the non-salvation, or of the damnation of all. The minor stands (it seems) upon this bottom; that those whom God the Father hath given unto Christ to be redeemed and saved by him, of necessity must and shall be redeemed and saved by him ; and those whom he hath not given unto him upon such an account (which are far the greater part of men) must, by a like necessity, perish or be damned, as not being redeemed by him, nor given unto him to be saved. *10th Reason.* "If the will and intention of the Father, the obedience and oblation of the Son, and the saving operation of the Holy Ghost, or effectualness of calling or sanctification, be of one and the same compass or extent, then did not Christ die for all men: But all the three particulars mentioned are of one and the same compass, or commensurable: Ergo." The reason of the consequence is evident: viz., because the saving operation of the Holy Ghost, or effectualness of calling, are not extended unto all men. The minor builds upon this sorites: the Father gives only his elect, whom alone he loves, to be redeemed by his Son: the Son only redeems those that are thus given unto him, as being those whom alone he loves: the Holy Ghost, being the love of the Father and the Son, sanctifies only the elect of the Father, and the redeemed of the Son.

*11th Reason.* "If no man wittingly and knowingly payeth a price of redemption for a captive, which he certainly knoweth this miserable man will never be the better for, then Christ died not for all men: But no man wittingly and knowingly payeth such a price upon such terms: Ergo." The reason of the sequel in the major proposition, is, because Christ knew certainly that the greatest part of men would never receive any benefit by his death: and upon this account it is altogether irrational to suppose that he died for them.

*12th Reason.* "If Christ died for all men without exception, then now in heaven he intercedeth for all men without exception:

But he intercedeth not for all men: Ergo.” This latter proposition fears no contradiction, and therefore stands by its own strength. The reason of the major seems to be, because it is unreasonable to conceive that Christ should do the greater and more difficult thing, as viz., die for those for whom he is unwilling to do the less, viz., intercede.

*13th Reason.* “If God intends and decrees the salvation of all men by the death of Christ, then it must needs follow, either that all men are saved, or that God his intentions and decrees become frustrate and attain not their end: But neither of these are true : for, 1. Certain it is that all men are not saved. 2. As certain it is, that God’s intentions and decrees never miscarry, or fall short of their ends : and to affirm this, is absurd, yea, blasphemous: Ergo.”

*14th Reason.* “If Christ by the counsel, intention, and decree of the Father, died for all men, it will follow that there is neither an election of any certain persons, nor a reprobation of any: But there is both an election of some certain persons, and a reprobation of some others : Ergo.” The reason of the major (because I find it not expressed) seems to be, because it is contrary to reason that God should intend or decree to give his Son to die for those whom he decreed to reprobate (*i. e.* to leave in the hand of everlasting perdition without all possibility of being saved) from eternity. And if there be no reprobation, there can be no election, inasmuch as these do “mutuo sese ponere, et auferre.” The minor stands upon the authority of the common interpretations of such Scriptures, which are commonly insisted on to prove such an election, and consequently, a reprobation corresponding with it. All which Scriptures, at least all such of them which colour best with such an election, we shall (God willing) fairly examine upon the point.

*15th Reason.* “If Christ, according to the intention and counsel of the Father, hath suffered death for all men, then God should stand equally or indifferently affected towards all men, yea, and saving grace should be universal: But God doth not stand equally affected towards all men, nor is saving grace universal: Ergo.” The consequence is supposed authentic without proof. The minor is argued, 1. From the gratuitous election of some. 2. From the like gratuitous vocation of some, as of the Israelites, Deut. 4:7, Psal. 76:1, 147:20. 3. From the covenant made with Abraham, and not with others. 4. From the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles. 5, and lastly, From that special favour, love, and grace, wherewith God

prosecuteth his elect.

*16th Reason.* “If Christ died for all men, and all men be not saved, then is God not omnipotent: But certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved, and, 2. That God is omnipotent: Ergo.” The minor needs no proof, as to either part of it. The reason of the consequence, in the major, is, because if Christ should die for all men, it would follow that God should be willing that such a benefit should be impetrated or procured for men, which he could not apply unto them.

*17th Reason.* “If Christ died for all men, and all men come not to be saved, then is the wisdom of God defective or imperfect : But certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved. 2. That the wisdom of God is not at all defective, but absolutely perfect: Ergo, Christ died not for all men.” The minor here also is presumed, as well it may. The consequence stands upon this supposition, That to fall short in compassing what a man intends, argues a deficiency in point of wisdom.

*18th Reason.* “If Christ should die, and make satisfaction for all men, and yet all men not be saved, God should be unjust, as viz. in receiving a full satisfaction for men, and yet refusing to receive them into favour, or to forgive them: But certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved; and, 2. That God is not unjust: Ergo, Christ died not for all men.” *19th Reason.* “If Christ died for all men, and all men come not to be saved, then doth that great love out of which God gave his Son unto men, vanish into an unprofitableness or unusefulness in respect of men: For to what purpose, or of what use is the love of God, in the gift of his Son unto men, if he doth not withal give them faith in his Son? But certain it is, 1. That all men come not to be saved; and, 2. That the great love of God in the gift of his Son doth not vanish in unprofitableness: Ergo.” A like argument is framed upon the account of the great love of the Son himself towards those for whom he died. Christ, saith the argument, so loved us, that whilst we were enemies, he died for us. Is it now credible that he should not apply a benefit merited or procured with so much sweat, and with such precious blood, unto those for whom he merited it ?

These arguments, with some texts of Scripture not here mentioned, cited to prove some particulars, together with some few sayings from the fathers, both which we intend to take and give knowledge of upon occasion, were in a manner the whole strength wherein the Synod of Dort so much magnified themselves against their adversaries, the

Remonstrants, in the traverse of the second head of matters controversial between them, which concerned the intentions of God in and about the death of Christ, as far as I am able to observe from the records of this synod. Concerning which arguments, I shall say no more at present but only these two things: 1. That though they be somewhat numerous, yet there is none of them but lieth very opportune and fair for answer; and, 2. That some of them, if not the greater part, stand bent against such an opinion, which I believe their antagonists did not hold: certain I am, they do not oppugn that doctrine of redemption which is maintained in this book. Nevertheless, because they may possibly be conceived by some, less considerate, to rise up with much strength against it, we shall take them into consideration respectively in their places. I will not say that there have been sufficient grounds laid, yea, and sufficiently proved, in the premises of our present discourse whereon to frame satisfactory answers even to those that are counted pillars amongst them, but shall leave the consideration hereof to the intelligent and impartial reader, and to the disquisition about them intended in the second part of this work.

I do not meet with any thing of moment in any other author to infringe the credit of the doctrine of general redemption, which doth not make one spirit with one or other of the arguments levied, as we have heard, by the said synod. This which I shall presently recite from the collocutors of the contra-remonstrancy at the conference at the Hague, ann. 1613, is but the same in effect with the first and fifth of those used by the synod. "For whomsoever Christ died, and obtained remission of sins, and reconciliation with God, for these also he obtained, by his death, deliverance from the bondage of sin, and the spirit of regeneration for newness of life : But Christ did not obtain deliverance from the bondage of sin, or the spirit of regeneration, for all men: Ergo." If any man conceives there is somewhat more in this argument of the said collocutors, which I shall next transcribe, than in any of the former, I am content that it shall stand as additional unto them. I find it in this form:

*20th Reason.* "All they for whom Christ died can freely say, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died for us,' Rom. 8:34: But they are only believers, and the elect, that can speak thus, ver. 33, not unbelievers, Mark 16:16: Ergo." The minor is further strengthened by this consideration: The consolation raised from the consideration of the death of Christ, which the apostle here (Rom. 8:32, 33, &c.) administereth unto

the saints, or believers, would have little solidity or worth in it, in case reprobates and unbelievers could as truly say that Christ died for them also.

This argument likewise from the same authors, is virtually contained in that already mentioned in the fifteenth place. Yet let it have the honour of an argument by itself.

*21<sup>st</sup> Reason.* “If reconciliation with God, and remission of sins, be obtained for all and every man, none excepted, then should,” or, ought, “the word of this reconciliation,” *i. e.* the gospel, “be preached,” or, declared, “and this continually, to all and every man: But the word of reconciliation is not thus preached to all and every man: Ergo.” The reason of the consequence is, because they for whom reconciliation is obtained, not being capable of enjoying it but by faith, and faith not being to be obtained but by hearing the word of this their reconciliation, it seems contrary to all reason that they should be deprived of the means of believing.

*22<sup>nd</sup> Reason.* The learned Chamier advanceth this argument against us, the strength whereof the observant reader will find lodged in the nineteenth reason already propounded. “To all those for whom Christ truly died, the death of Christ is profitable: But this death of his is not profitable unto all men: Ergo.” The major he proves, 1. From the proper import of the particle, “for,” which, saith he, always notes some benefit accruing to him, for whom any thing is said to be done. 2. From the state of the controversy. 3, and lastly, From the Scriptures, as where it is said, “He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us,” &c. Tit. 2:14. So again from Matt. 26:28, Rom. 5:8, 9. The minor he proveth, 1. From the concession of his adversaries themselves, the papists, concerning infants who die unbaptized; all which they exclude from salvation, and consequently from all benefit by the death of Christ. 2. From the concession almost of all, concerning persons of years of maturity; viz. that very many of these perish everlastingly, and so never come to receive any benefit by the death of Christ.

*23<sup>rd</sup> Reason.* In the same place, the same author subjoineth this argument, the same in substance with the former; “If Christ died for all men, then all men are saved,” or shall be saved: “But this is not so: Ergo.” The minor, which needs no proof, he proves from John in: 36, Rom. 2:8. For the consequence in the major proposition, he cites the apostle’s

discourse, Rom. 5:8—10, under the notion of an express probation of it. “But God commendeth his love towards us,” &c.

The Scriptures and arguments now propounded, are the effect and substance of all that I can readily find, or call to mind, pleaded and argued against the doctrine of general redemption, as it hath been stated, and asserted in our present discourse, excepting only some quotations from the fathers. If any thing of moment upon the same account shall further occur, or be offered unto me, either before, or under my examination of these, I shall not conceal it: but shall, as in the presence of God, and without the least touch or tincture of prejudice or partiality, acknowledge strength in any thing, where I apprehend strength, and show all submissive reverence to that which is above me. Yea, God knoweth that one reason moving me to exhibit beforehand, in the close of this first part, a particular of matters to be handled in the second, was, that in case any friend of the contrary doctrine conceives that he hath somewhat more pregnant or convincing, on the behalf of his opinion, either from the Scriptures, or otherwise, than any thing that I have yet taken into consideration, or intend to give satisfaction unto, he might have the opportunity of representing the same, either privately unto me, if he please, or otherwise publicly unto the world.

By occasion of the objection or argument mentioned in the fourteenth place, we shall, by way of digression, launch forth into the deep of the great question concerning personal election and reprobation : and soberly inquire whether the Scriptures do any where hold forth or teach any such decree of reprobation in God from eternity, whereby the persons of such and such men, or of such a determinate number of men, before any actual or voluntary sin perpetrated by them, and without any respect had to such perpetrations, be decreed by him, to be left under an unavoidable necessity of perishing everlastingly. Here also we intend tenderly to inquire what the Scripture teacheth concerning the estate of infants; and more particularly, whether it can be substantially proved from them, that any infant or infants whatsoever, dying before the commission of actual sin, are adjudged by God unto hellfire.

In my answer to the argument propounded in the fifteenth place, I shall take occasion, digression-wise also, to inquire into, and discuss the great question about universal grace ; viz. whether God vouchsafeth not unto all men without exception, a sufficiency of power or means whereby

to be saved. Within the verge of this debate we shall modestly inquire, whether God doth not vouchsafe unto all men the same, or a like sufficiency, at least in a geometrical proportion, of means, whereby to be saved.

And because, amongst other Scriptures, the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans is frequently, and this in very many places and passages of it, brought upon the stage of these controversies and disputes, and more particularly supposed to deliver impregnable grounds for such a personal election and reprobation, which we apprehend the Scriptures generally, yea, and in this very chapter, as plainly to oppose, as many men do confidently avouch; we therefore intend a particular and entire explication of this chapter by itself. Yea, I am under some present inclination of thoughts, to engage upon this in the first place, and to publish it by itself, before I put hand to the greater work. But in this, I shall willingly be determined by the advice of friends.

Concerning the testimonies of the fathers usually produced in way of discountenance to the avouched doctrine of this discourse, I judge the transcription of them no ways necessary, until we come to give answers unto them ; and therefore shall not encumber the reader's patience with them here. Unto whom, instead thereof, I shall address myself in this double request: 1. That he will please so far to comport with his own interest, and mine, as to strive by fervent and frequent prayer, to interest God himself in the composure of the work intended, that through much of his presence with me in the framing and inditing of it, if yet his good pleasure shall be not to judge a proportion of life and health for the finishing of it, too high a dignation for me, all my insufficiency for so great an undertaking may be drowned, so as not to appear in one kind or other, to the loss or disadvantage of any man that shall please to bestow his time in the perusal of it, or of any part of it; and that I may be enabled from on high to bring forth the truth in those high mysteries, which I shall be occasioned to search into therein, out of that thick darkness, which at present is spread by men round about them, into a clear and perfect light, that so they may become more savoury, more wholesome, and better prepared nourishment for the understandings and consciences of the generality of, men amongst us, than they have proved hitherto. My second request to the reader, with which I shall discharge him at the present, is, that he will make such a covenant with his expectations and



desires as not to look for the publishing of the second part of this work till after such a time, which may be reasonably judged competent for a man of a slow genius in writing on the one hand, and of almost continual diversions through by-employments on the other hand, to raise and finish such a building, as that in reason may be presumed to be.

**THE END.**

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU  
MY DEAR READER**

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**A TABLE**  
**OF SOME GENERAL RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE**  
**SCRIPTURES**  
DELIVERED IN THE FOREGOING DISCOURSE;  
*The Knowledge and Consideration whereof will give much Light into the*  
*Controversies there debated.*

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